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# Editor's Idea

Welcome to *The Wire's* 'review of two-thu-two' issue. From page 44, you'll find a 12-page map of the past 12 months in adventurous music, including our categorised charts and infamous writers' Pros & Cons section. Economic downturn or not, there's no sign of any let-up in the surge of brilliant new music that's been brought to our attention in the past year. Having just about survived the flurry of activity this autumn in celebration of this magazine's 20th year, we're fighting fit and raring to bring you the best sounds 2003 can offer. A Happy New Year to you all.

Pros: I'll remember 2002 mainly for its superlative live album, Barry Hoggan/David Sforzo/Sonic Youth's magnificent achievement with *All Tomorrow's Parties* at Los Angeles U2 deserves a chapter of its own: Boredoms, Sonic Youth, Peaches, Cannibal Ox, Television, Stogies, Jackie-O Motherfucker, Califone, Improv by Lee Ranaldo's and Kim Gordon's respective groups. Super-Collider in Rome; Boredoms again in London; Eterno Festival at the South Bank. Best Sonar for years with Yusano Tone, Luomo, Yo La Tengo, DJ/Rupture, et al. Peaches not giving a fuck at the Great Eastern Hotel; Le Tigre at Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; Acid Mothers Temple soundtracking manga at the QEH; Jaga Jazzist at the Spitz; Noxagt in Brick

Lane (and their text messages); SY at Shepherd's Bush; Ryoji Ikeda/Carsten Nicolai/Mika Vainio at the ICA; Iain Sinclair's M25 London Drift night at the Barbican; Tråd Gras Och Stinar at Neon Gallery Bröslarp, Sweden. 20 years, phew: Circle, Electrelane, Keith Rowe/Oren Ambarchi, Porter Ricks at The Wire's Paris match. Tonic for the troops: Zeena Parkins/Ikue Mori/Tim Barnes Trio, Lary 7, Alan Licht/Hrvatski/Joel Brooklyn, Tony Conrad, Jim Thirlwell in New York. At our Brooklyn party, putting faces to names after so many years (thanks Knut and Camille). Ben Bortwick's genius as head chef, and Jill Tipping's amazing Wire cake. Wireless ephemerian courtesy of Resonance FM ([www.resonancefm.com](http://www.resonancefm.com)): enjoy while it lasts and campaign for its continuance!

Reading Jonathan D Spence's *Memory Palace Of Matteo Ricci*; Paula Findlen's *Possessing Nature*; Benjamin Woolley on John Dee and Ada Lovelace; Alan Licht's *An Emotional Memoir Of Martha Kohn*; Michael Moore's *Stupid White Man*; Ashley Kahn's *A Love Supreme*; Stuart Isaacoff's *Temperament*.

Thomas Hirschorn's *Cavemanman* at Barbara Gladstone, NY; Barnett Newman at Tate Modern; Peter Brötzmann at Ystad Konstmuseum, Sweden.

Finally publishing huge pieces on musical titan(ja)s:

Alice Coltrane and Shirley Collins. Collective pat on the back: The Wire getting its shit together to release the *Adventures CD set* and *Undercurrents* book (thanks to Mute and Continuum).

Watching *Bowling For Columbine*; *Talk To Her*; *Minority Report*; The Conversation's revelatory new print; Kandahar; docs on Harry Patch and Jeff Buckley on BBC Four; Iain Sinclair and Chris Pettit on Channel 4 (if that isn't 'Reality TV...'); the NFT's Norwegian film session; Paolo Igliori's homemade but compelling Harry Smith film *American Music*.

New Year snowfalls and pyrotechnics in Haugeund. Picking up echoes of Athanasius Kircher in Jesuit Rome and Los Angeles's Museum of Jurassic Technology, and unexpectedly developing a taste for the Baroque, Pompeii's Villa of Mysteries; swimming under thunder in Sperlonga, Grand Canyon at sunset and Route 66 at dawn. Riddin' the range in Somerset, Suffolk and Palm Springs. At home, wood rather than concrete undertoot.

Cons: Musical cons seem trivial by comparison with the sheer arrogance of power and indiscriminate atrocities currently on show. Bush, Blair and co: which part of 'Middle East peace process' don't you understand?

ROB YOUNG



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# Letters

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**Letters should include a full name and address**

## Mind your language

I like the way that you did the cover of *The Wire* 226 for police society by bleeding off the word 'Motherfucker'. Personally, though, I tend to take a least out of Prince's (or what ever he is called today) book and call them 'Jackie O Motherfucks'.

John Lane London, UK

I had to write... A while ago in Paris I saw an alarmingly creative and utterly original British band upstage a contrived and mediocre American one. Guess which one ended up on your magazine's cover? Volcano The Bear's music stood so far apart from anyone I had heard in a long time, and they made Jackie-O Motherfucker sound like another all-guitar band with token 'weird' noises. They kept sounding like they were trying to start a song but couldn't quite find it. VTB should be huge, but they're probably not considered cool enough. That would be a huge shame.

Andy Miller Altrincham, UK

## Nature boy

I would like to congratulate you on an excellent and timely Sound Ecology article, 'Making The Nature Scene' (*The Wire* 226). As an artist whose work is influenced by ecological concerns, I was very inspired by the approach taken by these 'bio-acoustic' artists to the natural (and sometimes urban) world and their art. It has led me to explore some parallel ideas with my artwork.

David Grimbleby Southampton, UK

## Material witness

What a happy coincidence. After a long period of turntable and amplifier disasters, I had just recently been able to listen to some of my old vinyl. One of the first on the decks was Ze's *Mutant Disco* compilation. And then low me down it appears in the Soft Pink Truth CD review (Soundcheck, *The Wire* 226). Which inspires me to mention two minor points, and a major one. First, how dare you not mention the awesome 'Deputy Of Love' by Don Armando's Second Avenue Rhumba Band. And second, didn't once read that Scotty Pollitt's Green was going to call himself Gichi Dan, until he realised the name was taken?

Really importantly, you've got all confused about Material. Bill Laswell didn't bring in Whitney Houston to sing on *Mutant Disco*; that was the r/nic acid-lunged Nana Hendrix, ex-Labelle. The Whitney Houston effort

('Memones' - a thorough dog) is on the later Material LP *One Down*. The rest of the album is rather good, I feel, in the spirit of avant garde mix-up. I remind you, however, that in the past you have memorably referred to this one as 'the turd in the punchbowl' of their career, and seemed to prefer the early Material when they were a po-faced Joy Division covers band. Do your avant garde preferences depend on what's being reviewed, or is there something deeper?

Andrew Clark Paris, France

## Crossed Wire

Ben Watson, uber-preentious poet, Zappapologist and amusing socialist-improv mega-theory bullshitter, informs us that the group Wire are five years behind the times in his review of Iain Sinclair's M25 London Orbital (On Location, *The Wire* 226). However, his accuracy in this assertion is thrown into doubt by the fact that he can't remember what appeared before his eyes, and maybe his ears are equally fucked. Wire are described as 'sperdily', which is a pretty ridiculous thing to call any of them except maybe Bruce Gilbert, and observed to be 'balding'. Last week Gilbert still had a full head of silver hair. Watson also remarks that they were clad in black. Robert Grey seems to be wearing a light blue sweatshirt in the accompanying photo. Let's face it, the man is a music journalist - he was in the fucking band!

Cracked Machine via email

## Touché

I was disappointed not to have been part of *The Wire*'s 20th anniversary celebrations, my time spent on the magazine having been such a formative part of my twenties and all that. But being in a forest in Massachusetts, I was out of reach of all forms of communication. However, I made it back to the UK in time to pick up a copy of issue 225 in my newsgator. And a fine issue it is too. It made me smile to be reminded of the good old eccentric days of prehistoric magazine publishing. One question, though: If I'd have thought *The Wire* ought to be a 'sleek and stylish urban music/lifestyle' publication, why did I ask Tony Harrington to be Editor? Best of luck for the next 20...  
Adele Yaron (former Publisher, *The Wire*) via email

## Crocus's croaks

So, Peter Shapiro seems to have put a fair amount of effort into wrangling out references to describe Anticon

MC Oose One's 'sonic signature' (*The Wire* 225). But he overlooked a conspicuous comparison from outside the HipHop canon. To my ears, both Oose One's verbal and narrative delivery have often borne a resemblance to that of Pere Ubu: frontman David Thomas. Spin some of Thomas's Pedestrians/Wooden Birds-era LPs in conjunction with Oose and Boom Bip's *Circle* and check how they parallel and intersect.

Graham Sanford Chicago, USA

## Watts going on

I too would like to praise the John Stevens article in *The Wire* 224. Long overdue and a great appraisal of the musical worth of a very important figure. However, could I also single out a guy who for many years was inextricably linked with John Stevens as well as running influential groups of his own such as Amalgam, More Music and latterly the excellent Celebration Band? Namely Trevor Watts. Watts's input to the Improv and new music scenes over the years has been immense, as has his influence over many players. I'm sure an in depth interview in *The Wire* would be of huge interest to the readership of the magazine. Also catch *The Celebration Band* live if you can.

Nick Dart Rayleigh, Essex

## On second thoughts

Can you please now ban the use of 'sophomoric' in reviews as I think we have had to put up with the use of this ghastly word in music mags for long enough. Just say 'second', please. Also can you please have a glossary of specialist terms for non-musos/academics like me (perhaps on your Website)? I always have to look up pointilist, tintinnabulation, etc. I have real trouble hearing the musics you review and so any pointers (your Go To section in particular) as to where to hear it are gratefully received. We need more sources of information.

Toby Mearns via email

Point one: happy to oblige. Point two: try [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com). Point three: our upgraded Website will have more sounds and links in early 2003 - Ed

## Corrections

Issue 225 In Soundcheck, the title of the new CD by Rob Mazurek on Delmark should have read, *Silver Spines*. In Print Run, the title of Mick Fidler's S&P publication is *Industrial Evolution: Through The 80s With Cabaret Voltaire, not Revolution*, as published. ☐

**Coming next month: *The Wire* 228. On sale from 23 January 2003.**

**With the issue, all subscribers will receive a free copy of a new compilation from Berlin's Club Transmediale organisation. See the inside back cover for details**

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# Bitstream

News and more from under the radar.

Compiled by The Trawler



RIP: Mal Waldron

Pianist **Mal Waldron** died on 2 December in Brussels after a battle with cancer. He played with Charles Mingus and John Coltrane, but was perhaps most famous as Billie Holiday's accompanist from 1950-59. He is survived by his seven children >> Since 1998, the **Borderline** show on Freies Radio Kassel (105.8 FM) has been broadcasting *The Wire's* 50 Records of the Year and will do so again this year every Friday in January. The broadcasts will be available at [www.borderline-extra.de](http://www.borderline-extra.de) three days after each broadcast and will be archived there for 12 weeks >> Continuing the BBC's new policy of ignoring its public service remit, **BBC London 94.9** has axed the shows of Ross Allen, Dr Bob Jones, Kevin Le Gendre, Imran Khan and, most tragically, Coldcut's *Solid Steel*. People wishing to protest should send an email to [info@bbc.co.uk](mailto:info@bbc.co.uk) and [feedback@bbc.co.uk](mailto:feedback@bbc.co.uk) and cc campaign@londumb.co.uk to join the Londumb campaign against the dumping down of the BBC >> The Neon Gallery in Bräslarp, Sweden continues its association with **Jim O'Rourke** by releasing (on clear vinyl) his soundtrack to Herbert Brenon's film, *He Who Laughs*. Later in the year, the gallery's new label will release the audio portion of **Christian Marclay's** video *Guitar Drag*, which was part of the Hayward Gallery's *Sonic Boom* exhibition >> Tamzdat is completing its exhaustive survey of the legendary Czech underground

group **Plastic People Of The Universe** with the reissue of *Muz Bez Us/Man With No Ears* and *Co Znamena Vesti Kone/Leading Horses* (the last of the group's original albums to be reissued on CD). The label will also release *The Plastic People Of The Universe 1969-2001*, a 15 CD box set including all of their albums, live recordings and a disc of Velvet Underground and Frank Zappa covers. They are available at [www.tamzdat.org](http://www.tamzdat.org) >> With a fresh injection of Lottery money, the new **Horniman Music Gallery** at the Horniman Museum in Forest Hill, London opened on 12 December. The gallery, housing 1600 of the museum's vast 8000-strong collection of instruments, features everything from ancient Egyptian clappers to English concertinas and ranks as one of the world's premier collections of sound making apparatus. Point your Web browser to [www.horniman.ac.uk](http://www.horniman.ac.uk) >> Following Phil England's feature in *The Wire* 226 comes news that from 19-23 March 2003 the **Australian Forum for Acoustic Ecology** will be hosting a conference on the relationship between organisms and the sonic environment. The event will take place at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne and will feature presentations from R Murray Schafer, Hildegard Westerkamp, Elliott Berger, Bruce Johnson and others. More information is available at [www.afae.org.au](http://www.afae.org.au) >> **Rolling Stone** may be a bloated, complacent

version of its former self, but they still bring the noise on file sharing. In an ad the magazine took out in *The New York Times* on 26 October, they bite the hand that feeds by saying, "A BIG FAT THANKS TO RECORD EXECS, thank you for fighting the good fight against Internet MP3 file-swapping. Because of you, millions of kids will stop wasting time listening to new music and seeking out new bands. No more spreading the word to complete strangers about your artists. No more harmful exposure to thousands of bands via Internet radio, either. With any luck, they won't talk about music at all..." >> Wire contributor **Marque Boone's** book, *The Road Of Excess: A History Of Writers On Drugs*, has just been published by Harvard University Press. As you can probably guess from the title, it covers more than you ever wanted to know about writers who either took or wrote about drugs. More information is available at [www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog/00000A.html](http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog/00000A.html) >> Those of the incredibly strange music persuasion may be delighted to learn that film maker Philip Anagnostos has completed work on a documentary on **Bruce Haack**, the man responsible for the electronic acid nightmare that is *The Electric Lucifer*. The film, *Bruce Haack: The King Of Techno*, features appearances from such Haack aficionados as Beck, Mouse On Mars and Tippy. More info at [www.haackmovie.com](http://www.haackmovie.com). □

## Death Row

How would Will Oldham spend his last day on Earth?

You are allowed...

### Three records

The Bob Seger System *Mongrel*  
Shellac *The Futurist*  
The Amosman Envois *Wlon*

One film  
*Foxes* by Adrian Lyne

One book  
Thomas Carlyle *Sartor Resartus*

### Three visitors

My kids

Last meal

Something warm to get me through the day without getting irritable

Final message for the world

I'll go with what the musketeers went with  
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## Bawls of confusion By Biba Kopf

Oxbow incident: Eugene Robinson and guitarist Niko Wenner

"We have got this strange peripheral history of our music being a kind of perverse catalyst for people in acts of criminality," ventures Oxbow vocalist Eugene Robinson, laughing as he adds, "but that's really an amusing side story to what we do." At London's ICA 24 hours earlier, the Oakland, California quartet are variously polarising and pole-axing a largely curious crowd with a performance that underpins Robinson's sexual psychodramas with the twin intensities of hardcore and Berg-like expressionist opera. With one hand down his pants savagely tugging at his sex and the other choking a microphone, Robinson is dribbling and howling like a wolf turned rabid from biting hard on the lemons of Antonin Artaud, Nick Cave, Marvin Gaye and Iggy Pop dangling between the legs of Lydia Lunch. Meanwhile, his three Oxbow partners grumly shadow his trains of thought, even as they drench the tracks beneath them with their withering electric storms. At odds with his healthy body-builder physique and the blues boasts and puns of some lyrics, such as "The Snake & The Stick" opening Oxbow's new album *An Evil Heat*, Robinson onstage embodies conditions of extreme sexual abjection more than abandonment or ecstasy. The contrast with good health was even more marked when he moonlighted with the organised trio Steamboat Switzerland at Bern's Taktlos festival last September.

With or without Oxbow, the undeniable physicality of his performances draws heavily ambivalent responses. "I think the classic quote [from one woman] was, 'Some of us like to know a man for a little bit before we see his cock,'" he sighs. "Well, that's very doctrinaire thinking, and my response to that was, that's a luxury that she will be ill afforded at an Oxbow show."

"We are not confrontationalist," continues the singer. "Certain performers seem to invite audience abuse at certain points in their career. What happens with us after we have played is of secondary consideration. We

are always surprised that people have any sort of reaction at all, because we have gone from rehearsing, recording and releasing a record, which is a situation where nobody cares about us, to playing a show, where all of a sudden people have very strong feelings about it one way or another. And either they try to fight, or they want to hug us and establish a dialogue, or any number of different responses. It's all quite bewildering. We have been doing this a pretty long time and it still doesn't cease to bewilder."

Oxbow formed in Oakland around 1990. In the UK they licensed their debut album, *Fuckfest*, to Pathological, who later compiled it with its contentious successor, *King Of The Jews* (with Sammy Davis Jr as cover star), on the CD, *The Bats Of The Great Meat Grinder Collection*. The sweat and stink of the ongoing sexual obsessions at the root of their music corrode the separation between performance and reality. What with their regular European visits through the 90s, the continent has become used to the stink. Last May, they returned to the UK for the first time since 1990, and it was like starting over with what guitarist Niko Wenner characterises as "that first uncomfortable conversation". Robinson continues, "When we played this place called One in Twelve in Bradford, it devolved into various forms of unseemly violence, and afterwards a contingent of women came up and said they felt they were assaulted. I said, 'No, it only becomes sexism if you feel like you were the only ones who were assaulted. You could speak to ten people here who all felt the same way you did, and strangely enough, do you know what that is? That's exactly how I feel.'"

Oxbow records have featured guest appearances by such formidable women as Lydia Lunch, Manneke Fathull (on *Serenade in Red*) and Jarboe (on *An Evil Heat*), but the group aren't so crass as to wheel them out merely as character witnesses against accusations

of sexism. Animal attraction notwithstanding, Oxbow have a deep empathy with these artists who similarly transcend barriers between art and reality.

"Niko and I did this radio session and they were very nervous about having us over," Robinson recalls. "But after the interview was over, the interviewer said, 'Well, you seem like a couple of nice chaps. I am really surprised'. In that moment she was clearly throwing her money behind the two men sitting in the chair who were nicely dressed, fairly articulate, speaking about music and being very gentle with her. In the same voice she was saying that the persons onstage were some kind of art contrivance. Well, I feel much more of a man and of myself within the confines of the music that I am making than in any other regard in my life. Simply because people think it is artifice and nobody believes it, I can write the words we use. I can be incredibly truthful, direct and honest. But I feel less in my skin now than I do onstage, or in other things I like to do, like fighting [Robinson is editor-at-large for the no holds barred fight magazine, *Grappling*]."

"People can't reconcile these images of us," he explains, "so they have to sacrifice one for the other. Well, that's OK if it makes them feel better. But the people I like are those who have an innate understanding of the fact that it's a combination, and Lydia Lunch has a got a real great sense of that, which I understood immediately through working with her. Some people understand that for some of us this is the artifice, and that we exist in our private moments as these creatures of mind and body... the whole demurge thing; the realm of eternal ideas and turning it into something that makes sense in terms of notes and melodies and harmonies and patterns and lyrical impulses and thematic drives."

Robinson concludes: "It's like Nina Simone once said when she stalked offstage. 'This shit is not easy, you try it.' □ *An Evil Heat* is out now on Neurot

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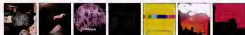
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# Gert-Jan Prins

Noise Girl. By Phil England



"These boxes make sound as soon as you switch them on," says Dutch electronic improviser Gert-Jan Prins of his hotwired music equipment. "A solo performance is about getting them to go in the direction you want, in accordance with how you feel and what sounds good in the room with the PA, then bringing that energy to the public and cleaning the club walls with the sound system. Some people seemed even to like the *Prins Live CD* [released on Grob] for that reason: they listen to it loud and start cleaning their house."

For Prins, who currently lives in Amsterdam, these boxes are essentially homemade radios that feed back on themselves. They spit, fizz, judder, let off steam, ripple and pulse with analogue and sometimes ear-splitting precision. It was the magic of radio that inspired Prins to start "seriously soldering" back in 1975, at the same time as he was playing drums. "I was doing transmitter and radio electronics just for fun," he recalls. "At 15 me and a couple of boys in our block were constructing FM range transmitters and antennas and talking to each other – and people in other towns – by air. Up to age 20 I was living like a radio amateur."

Although he continued to play drums in a variety of improv projects through the 80s and into the early 90s, Prins finally had the bright spark of combining his electronic knowledge with his musical endeavours some 20 years later, when he was invited to create a group composition for Quartetto New Amsterdam. "The piece came out like electronically distorted chamber music," he remembers, "and that was the beginning of a new period. The electronics gave me more developed sound possibilities. Some people liked it, others said, 'Why don't you play percussion, what is that shit?'"

There was a crossover period when Prins was playing electronics and drums simultaneously, but since 1998 he has devoted himself solely to his circuitry. Significantly, he says that he still feels like he's playing drums with his current setup, and over the years he

has developed a remarkably expressive and frequently percussive facility with his electronics, honed in performance with collaborators ranging from Dutch improvising pianist Misha Mengelberg to Sonic Youth guitarist Lee Ranaldo. He continues to refine his equipment at home through a process of trial and error.

"I started by taking a portable household radio and putting small homemade transmitters directly onto the speaker cones," says Prins, explaining the evolution of his system. "If you put too much signal into the transmitter it feeds back. At a certain point I decided I wanted to make a more hi-fidelity sound, so I built these four slightly different transmitters and receivers and put their output signals into a mixing desk, where I can also manipulate them. I've recently introduced four laboratory square-wave generators which can manipulate the chain of feedback giving the rhythmic sounds, which I can also make with the radio boxes themselves."

Prins often incorporates TV into his live performance, with bright flashes of broken colour streaking across the screen in an apparently random fashion. Another feature of Prins's system is that it can incorporate a microphone feed from a live instrumentalist. On Dawn, a superb one-off live collaboration with Peter Van Bergen and Christian Fennesz recorded at Berlin's Total Music Meeting in 2000, he sounds like a more abrasive Keith Rowe with radio shards roughened up, spurring, spluttering and stammering. Van Bergen's saxophone gets fed into Prins's system and breaks up with violence, finally disintegrating and disappearing into the maelstrom and FM static.

Prins performs predominantly to improvised music audiences though as influences on his solo pieces he cites "the music and the mentality" of Iggy Pop's *Raw Power*, Pita, The Velvet Underground's "White Light/White Heat", Peter Van Bergen and Pan Sonic. It's easy to see how the energy, provocation and visceral power of these inspirations inform Prins's work (check out the *g55g 12"* on Creamgarden as a great

example of telescoped highlights put together in his home studio). The new, young audience that has developed over the last five years for improvised and electronic music seems to "get" it, even if some of the more established improv audiences occasionally don't.

Prins is a member of Mameo, the electronics "supergroup" formed around ANM guitarist Keith Rowe that played a large part in raising the profile of the new generation of electronics players among improvised music audiences. Right now the group are undergoing some kind of rethink about how to proceed, but Prins is kept more than busy with his solo performances and various collaborative projects. He's played 58 shows this year – mainly in Europe, but also ten dates on the West Coast of the USA with flautist Anne La Berge, and five dates in Australia and New Zealand with The Flirts. His duo with analogue synth player Cor Fuhler. He also found time to act as one quarter of The Vacuum Boys, a joke electronics quartet which includes an ex-member of Stillupsteype.

Historically Prins's work has many precedents, from the homemade boxes and circuits of John Cage's great collaborator David Tudor, to the "cracked everyday electronics" of the Swiss duo Voce Crack. Then there are the folk who have subverted the normal functioning of the domestic CD player such as Nic Collins, Oval and Yasunao Tone. But Prins suggests his work is closest to the no-input mixing desk system used as a performance instrument by Toshimaru Nakamura, Jeff Carey and Marco Ciommano, since his radios can also form feedback loops with his mixing desk. "That system is more straightforward, more clean, less chaotic than mine," he quickly qualifies. "You can control it more easily I like to work with something that is a little bit unstable and out of control." □

**Recent releases:** Gert-Jan Prins *g55g* (Creamgarden 12"), Cor Fuhler & Gert-Jan Prins *The Flirts* (Erastwhite); The Vacuum Boys *Play Songs From The Sea of Love* (Fire Inc.); Van Bergen/Prins/Fennesz *Dawn* (Grob). Website: [www.gjp.mfo](http://www.gjp.mfo)



# Global Ear: Beijing

**A survey of sounds from around the planet. This month: Emerging from the era when Western music was vetted for 'spiritual pollution', China is undergoing a musical cultural revolution fuelled by bootlegs sold out of duffelbags. By Christiaan Virant**



Going underground: shopping for bootlegs above and below street level; laptop duo FM3 live

Tiananmen Square, 7am. As day breaks over the Mao Zedong Mausoleum, three very punks snarl down the lens for an American photographer. Mohawks and leather mix with stark Stalin grey in a heady image of modern, urban China. Across the street and inside the crimson gates of Beijing's Forbidden City, a similar scene plays out: prominent Chinese DJs, clad in brand-name high street fashions, pose in the vast Imperial Palace where emperors once handed down edicts spurring trade with the West. Not far outside the city, tattooed, long-haired rockers strut along the Great Wall as reporters press for quotes about communism, politics and, inevitably, the 1989 Tiananmen Square killings.

These are the clichéd images of rock 'n' roll in the world's last great communist state – old versus new, East versus West – all watered down for mass media consumer comfort. But dig a little deeper and you'll find a nascent brew of contemporary sounds and contradictory ideas boiling just below the surface of China's sprawling capital.

Beijing boasts one of the most ramshackle scenes in Asia, trailing just behind Tokyo and Manila. Barely a decade ago, a typical Friday night meant dinner with friends, maybe a pint or two at a restaurant and then bed by 10pm. Now, even on frigid winter weekends, punters are spoilt for choice. 21st century Beijing is a trip into the past, present and future of modern music as punks fight for attention against a growing din of rap/Metal, HipHop and digital hardcore.

"Punk may not be the underground fashion anymore, but we're still here playing it," says Xiao Rong, guitarist and lead singer for Beijing's legendary hardcore group Brain Failure. Xiao and a ragtag group of likeminded bored teens helped fuel a mid-1990s guitar explosion that borrowed heavily from the DIY attitude of 70s-era British punk. But rather than thumbing their noses at musical convention and pioneering a specifically Chinese sound, the vast majority of Beijing artists seek acceptance by imitation. One of the greatest compliments for a local group is that they "sound just like" a name-brand Western act. Only a handful of groups have developed sounds that resonate beyond China's borders: psychedelic surf-guitar trio Cold Blooded Animal appeared at SXSW 2000 in Austin, Texas; local rap/Metal rockers Thin Man played the Fuji Rock festival in 2001; and the laptop duo FM3 played Berlin and Rome in 2002.

Ask most musicians why Beijing boasts hundreds of groups playing such a narrow range of music and they

will initially blame audiences they claim haven't had enough exposure to more diverse sounds. Probe a little deeper, however, and the blame will eventually fall on the government. For decades, hardline communists enforced a strict embargo on all cultural imports. During Mao's 1967-76 Cultural Revolution, even classical music was shunned as a "bourgeois" threat. The economic reforms of later years helped to ease the ban, but to this day China's music output remains highly regulated, with song lyrics vetted for "spiritual pollution" and other governmental bugbears.

As a result, Beijing's leading record retailers are not multi-storey, multimedia consumer palaces: there are no Virgin Megastores, no HMVs, no Tower Records here. The capital of the world's most populous nation can't even boast a basement shop culture where DJs trade the crates for rare grooves. Instead, aural artefacts in Beijing are usually available from one place and one place only: a gritty duffelbag bursting with dirt cheap pirate booty.

Enticed by the promise of cheap CD pressing, a number of top record companies shifted manufacturing to southern China in the 1990s. While these corporate giants cut costs, enterprising locals passed the discs on to comrades at makeshift CD burning factories. Operating out of small apartments or sometimes even government-run office buildings, pirates churned out millions of bootleg discs that were stuffed into rudimentary plastic packages and sold out of bags and backpacks for 50p a throw in bars, street markets and metro stations nationwide.

Combined with the import and illegal resale of cut-out CDs – stock that has either been scraped or deleted by Western record companies – Chinese consumers were soon awash in a wave of previously unavailable music. As the bootleggers refined their operations and brought an ever wider range of unofficial products to the marketplace, they inadvertently launched a new, and decidedly more enjoyable cultural revolution. The communist stranglehold on Western culture relaxed, and Beijing became a modern day digital pirate Mecca. Starved for decades, China's youth responded. Xiao Rong and his friends picked up guitars, inspired by the influx of new tunes.

But even as bootleggers fuelled Beijing's sonic boom, they are working to destroy the very foundations necessary for musicians to prosper. Based on a steady diet of cheap CDs, punters are simply not willing to pay full price for new releases by local groups. The result? Fame rarely brings fortune and even top performers are forced to scrape by on the receipts from occasional out-of-town gigs.

"The record market is beyond dead," believes Feng Jiangzhou, a musician and the former brains behind the underground label Backhead. "Piracy has killed the business. There is no money to be made." While touring interior China, one noted singer/songwriter began to collect bootlegs of her recent album release. After finding more than 100 different versions, she was forced to admit defeat.

Artists lucky enough to score a contract with one of the city's two independent rock labels receive an advance of around £2500. Most of the money is spent in the recording studio and musicians walk away with about one month's wages, or just enough to buy a new piece of equipment. Album royalties are not even discussed since both artist and label know they face cutthroat competition from expert pirates. To minimise losses, CDs are pressed in small runs, distributed at a handful of local state-run shops and are not reissued once they have sold out.

Most groups release a single album before economic pressures tear them apart. Live gigs are the only opportunity to make money and China's labyrinthine bureaucracy requires a host of permits and licences for even a modest show, forcing all but the handful of government-approved pop icons underground.

DJs who worked the burgeoning club scene fare much better. China's youth began flocking to clubs in the early 1990s, seeking escape from the colourless routine of pre-reform China. As state planning rapidly gave way to bare-knuckle capitalism, clubbing became the pastime for Beijing's nouveau riches, who could be found every weekend cracking bottles of champagne in VIP rooms to a soundtrack of slamming House tunes.

Nowadays, in cities outside China's capital, punters jock the night away to MP3s of the latest Trance and progressive House tracks, downloaded fresh each week by broadband-wired DJs. But in Beijing vinyl is king and no DJ is taken seriously if they show up for a gig sporting a bag of home-burnt CD-Rs. The vinyl fetish means that Beijing clubs are forever a step or two behind the rest of the world, as local DJs have to rely on intermittent trips abroad to reload their record boxes. And some genres of dance music never make it through the bamboo curtain. Drum 'n' bass and UK Garage both fell flat in local clubs, where, with the exception of a nascent HipHop crowd, audiences prefer their beats starched, straitlaced and 4/4. "Beijing just doesn't do funk," says one veteran DJ. "It's a dirty, sprawling industrial mess. It's great for rock 'n' roll. But forget the abstract, forget the interesting and, especially, forget the sexy slow stuff." □

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"This month US policy will kill 4,000 children under the age of five in Iraq, according to UN studies. This is not foreign policy - it is state sanctioned mass murder that is nearing holocaust proportions." - Professor Naum Chomsky, Edward Bernheim, Edward Said and Howard Zinn, *Isis to the Independent* (21/1/99)

Stahl: "We have heard that half a million children have died. This is more children than died in Hiroshima. Is the price worth it?" Albright: "This is a very hard choice, but the price... is stark the price is worth it." - Interview with former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, CBS Television (12/5/98)

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"We are in the process of destroying an entire society. It is as simple and terrifying as that. It is illegal and immoral." - Dennis Halliday, former UN Assistant Secretary General, and Humanitarian Aid Co-ordinator for Iraq, in his resignation speech (30/9/98)

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darkroom daylight - feat 9

# Invisible Jukebox

Every month we play a musician a series of records which they're asked to identify and comment on – with no prior knowledge of what they're about to hear



## John Sinclair

Tested by Edwin Pouncey. Photos by Mikael Gothage



John Sinclair – poet, journalist and former manager of 60s revolutionary rockers The MCS – was born in Flint, Michigan in 1941. His father worked in the automobile industry, a trade that could have easily sucked the young Sinclair under had he not been introduced to R&B. At high school he became a college radio DJ, and was drawn towards writing poetry after reading the work of such Beats as Allen Ginsberg and, in particular, Charles Olson. After two years he dropped out to explore the highs of modern jazz and narcotics, the combination fuelling his consuming interest in music and 'alternative society'.

In 1964 Sinclair began studying at Wayne State University, after managing to complete a BA course at the University of Michigan. In the same year, after several brushes with the law for drug possession, one of which landed him a six month sentence at Detroit's House of Correction, he and his partner Leni set up the Artist's Workshop, later known as Trans-Love Energies, a communal arts collective through which he published his early volumes of poetry. Following another drug bust in 1967, Sinclair agreed to manage The MCS. Like fellow Detroit rockers The Stooges, they were eventually signed to Jac Holzman's Elektra Records, who released their debut album *Kick Out The Jams* in 1969, but they were soon kicked off the label after placing an inflammatory ad for the album in the underground press.

In 1968 Sinclair moved to Ann Arbor, where he began the White Panther Party in support of the Black Panthers. He organised the first Detroit Rock & Roll Revival in 1969, but his entrepreneurial activities were abruptly curtailed when he received a ten year prison sentence for passing two joints to an undercover cop. The severity of the sentence prompted a successful campaign for his release, involving a Freedom Rally in 1971, which included an appearance by John Lennon and Yoko Ono. Undeterred by his spells in jail, Sinclair continued to champion his musical and political beliefs by putting together the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festivals, which hosted landmark appearances by Sun Ra and his Arkestra.

Sinclair now lives in New Orleans, where he does radio work, gives readings and produces music with his group The Blues Scholars. His latest publication is a poetical tribute to the language and music of the blues called *Fattening Frogs For Snakes: Delta Sound Suite* (Surreal Press). Elsewhere, Sinclair's work with The MCS has been documented on his Total Energy label, the most recent chapter being *Human Being Lawnmower: The Baddest & Maddest Of The MCS*. The Jukebox took place in London.

## THELONIOUS MONK "ROUND MIDNIGHT (TAKE 2)"

FROM MOVIE ALONG: THE COMPLETE BOLD STUDIO RECORDINGS OF THELONIOUS MONK 1962-1968 (COLUMBIA LEGACY) 1998

Ah, Monk. [Sound of drilling from floor above] He's got a new rhythm section [laughs]. It sounds like Monk on Riverside to me.

How did you first get interested in jazz?

Well I was very fortunate. I was at college and a kid asked me if I wanted to take over his radio show on the dormitory radio station. It didn't even go out into the world – it was just piped in, they called it carrier current. So I went on the air and I played rhythm and blues from like seven till eight in the morning, that's when I first learned to stay up all night. After a couple of shows this guy, who was like the campus beatnik, looked me up. He said, "Was that you on the radio?" I said, "Yeah". He said, "No shit, can I come in?" So we sat there for about three hours ranting and raving about the records playing, and after a while he said, "Are you into jazz, man?" and I said, "No, I don't think so. I've never really heard any". So he grabbed me by the arm and marched me up to his room and sat me down. He put on "Og" by Miles Davis with Jackie McLean and Sonny Rollins, and about 30 seconds into that I said, "Yeah, I like this". So then I got fanatical. I began going to the record shop in this little college town and started investigating all the jazz records.

Monk here a particular piece in your heart, hasn't he?

I've actually centred a major work in verse on him called *Thelonious: A Book Of Monk* that I've been working on for about 20 years now, where I'm writing a piece in verse for every piece he recorded. When I was coming up in jazz, Monk was not the first person we turned to. Miles and Coltrane were still creating. Then I got into Cecil Taylor, Sun Ra, Albert Ayler, Archie Shepp, Mingus, all those guys. But when Monk died in 1982 I thought: "Jeez, this guy's gone and I've never really confronted his music full scale." I should study Monk's music because it was a brilliant achievement. The only reasonable thing to do was to go back and listen to it all in sequence. As I progressed through it I finally decided that I wanted to write something for everything he had ever recorded. I've written over half; it's about 150 pieces and I've written over 80, it's slow going. Each of my Monk poems is written to go with the recording. When I write them I play the piece over and over again so it's got the right tempo and feeling.

## ARCHIE SHEPP "MALCOLM, MALCOLM, SEMPER MALCOLM"

FROM JAZZPAPA: A WORD COLLECTION NEW ALLIANCE 1995

Archie Shepp [recites the poem]. I love this.

You obviously know this very well.

I've heard it a million times.

How do you look back on Malcolm X?

I was a big follower of Malcolm X, in terms of my future development, especially culturally. He was very influential. His concept was that the government and white people in general were not going to do anything for the black man or woman, and that the idea was to take matters into your own hands and create your own newspaper, your own institution, your own shops and whatever you could do for yourself. I took that whole idea and applied it to my own perspective.

I saw Malcolm X three different times. Once with Elijah Mohammed at the same auditorium in Flint, Michigan where I saw my first R&B shows, and it was one of the major experiences of my life. All the men sat on one side and the women sat on the other, and should any white people come, what was not likely, they had to sit in a segregated place. I thought that was reasonable, because that was the way we treated

them, but I was separated from my black friends who had brought me to the thing. The police wanted to come in and search people. The Muslims had a strict policy of no weapons, and if you had a weapon you had to check it. They took them from you at the door and you could collect it when you came out. They told the police: "Our religion specifies that there can be no weaponry in here, so you're welcome to come in but leave everyone else alone to have to leave your guns at the door." Well, they weren't going for that. They interrupted Elijah Mohammed in the middle of his speech to go and talk to the head of police. While he was gone Malcolm X, who had given a formal warm-up speech, came back out to the podium. He leaned on the podium and just started talking about the police and the nature of America. Man, it just blew my mind, the shit he was saying was so true. He really gave an analysis that was brilliant, much more so than his formal speech, because he was just rapping.

## MCS "I CAN ONLY GIVE YOU EVERYTHING"

FROM RABBIT IN ANNIS MOORE 1998

Uhh, now you're talking. Everybody in our neighbourhood used to listen to this about 100 times a day when it came out.

What is your earliest memory of The MCS?

I was in prison in 1966 for six months for marijuana possession. The day after I got out, they had a big homecoming party for me and these guys were there. They didn't get around to play until three in the morning; by then it was too late for them to play, as the noise would have been too much. I thought they were wonderful for coming to welcome me back and I didn't even know them. They had recently moved into the same neighbourhood I lived in, so I got to know them and saw them play their first set at the Grande Ballroom. I had been out of rock 'n' roll for a long time when I saw that. I was a jazz fanatic.

What made you decide to be the manager?

Well, it wasn't so much that I wanted to. I hung around with them for a year and [singer] Rob Tynner and I became the closest of pals. I'd go to all their gigs because I loved the way they played and I just didn't want to miss a chance of hearing them. What was most exciting about them to me was that they ended every night with this open-ended freedom thing called "Black To Comm". They might do anything in this piece, and so the real fanatics of their music had to go to every concert because it would always be different. Before they even knew me, they called their music avant rock. Then I found out that Rob had taken his name from McCoy Tyner, which immediately piqued my interest.

Everybody assumes you introduced MCS to free jazz.

Well, that's the legend, but they were already into it before I met them. Rob Tynner and the artist Gary Grimshaw were best friends at Lincoln Park High School. They used to come into the city to visit the Artist's Workshop, then they'd go back to Lincoln Park and tell everybody about these poets and jazz players they'd met. I found out later that this was part of their strategy to infiltrate our neighbourhood and become friends with me. I was considered to be a leading figure in the avant garde art community. I wrote a column for the underground newspaper *The Fifth Estate*. I had the Artist's Workshop and I was active with readings and concerts. They had set out to win me over, which was quite flattering. I thought.

## THE GRATEFUL DEAD "THE SAME THING"

FROM SO MANY ROADS (1985-1995) (GRATEFUL DEAD) 1997

Is that The Dead? I knew their first album and that was about it for me musically, but I liked what they stood

## Invisible Jukebox

for, I liked the blues stuff and the stuff with Pigen.

They came to Detroit on their first tour with these two guys, Rock Souly and Danny Rifkin, managing them who were just total freaks. We ended up taking them to Ann Arbor to play a free concert, and after they left I thought: You know, these guys are as freaked out as I am, maybe even more so, yet at the same time they've got a record out on Warner Brothers and they're doing a national tour. Maybe I could do this with The MC5?

I could manage them because, first of all, I was concerned about their welfare. I wasn't approaching it as a way to rake in some money. I thought this was the greatest fucking rock 'n' roll band in the world and they deserved better. I started speaking up for them and would call around to get better jobs, I would deal with their equipment and transportation, and pretty soon I was the manager. We never had a paper agreement, consequently I've never received any payment or anything. My reward was to go to jail for two and a half years [laughs].

**Was there a distinct divide between the scene in San Francisco and what was going down in the more industrialised parts of America back then?**

We lived in a different environment. When San Francisco had the Summer of Love in '67, we had the Detroit riots. We tried to have a Summer of Love but it didn't work. We did a love-in on 30 April 1967 and the police attacked it on horseback. That was what Detroit was like, they didn't want any hippies. In Detroit they wanted you to go and make cars. Any manifestation of anything that didn't point towards working class organisation was a threat to the system, because everything was centred on manufacturing those automobiles and the parts for them.

### BROTHER AH (ROBERT NORTHERN)

#### WITH MAX ROACH

RAP FROM SOUND AWARENESS (KEPT 1972)

I don't know this.

**It's a famous jazz drummer rapping.**

Maa? Really?

**He's playing with a guy called Robert Northern.**

Robert Northern the French horn player? I missed this one somehow. This is out of sight, I've got to get this. **It's almost in the style of The MC5's religious advisor, Brother JC Crawford. What did he actually do?**

I remember we were playing an outdoor concert one day and these two crazy guys came up. They said, 'Go you mind if we come up on the break and say something about Zenta?' We're religious leaders, we have this religion called Zenta'. We said, 'We'd be pleased to accommodate you'. They would say all this gobbledygook that really didn't make any sense, but they were very convincing and then they'd pass this hat. When they came down and were counting their money we realised they were really hustling money for beer and drugs. So naturally this really enraged them to us, much more than the religious aspect, and we became pals with them and Jesse, or JC, would come to the gig. We had installed a four-track tape player in the van, which was the precursor of eight-track. We would drive 70 miles to a gig with James Brown Live At The Apollo blasting from the speaker and everybody smoking about 50 joints. One night we got to the gig and Jesse Crawford went up and gave The MC5 an introduction he'd based on the introduction for James Brown Live At The Apollo. It just passed the hell out of us, so we started taking him all the time. He would give these speeches that would get these kids into a frenzy, even before the first note started. We were trying to develop a show that would be a coherent presentation from beginning to end, something that would take people to different places.

### So how did you develop Zenta?

I later formed the First Ann Arbor Church of Zenta. We found that if you had an ecclesiastical, non-profit, corporation you could own property and buy supplies without paying taxes, because churches were exempt. We institutionalised Zenta, we bought our houses in Ann Arbor under Zenta, they were owned by the First Zenta Church. My idea at that time was to also develop it as a way to claim that marijuana and psychedelic drugs were sacraments. This is after I got out of prison in '71. We wanted to go into court and say, 'We've established ourselves, we own property, we have a dogma and it involves smoking marijuana and taking LSD, that's our sacrament'. We never got that far, but I was preparing for that. The idea was eventually to be able to distribute the sacrament without threat of arrest. What a great scheme, I thought.

### BOBBY SEALE

#### "PRISON INTERVIEW"

FROM MUSIC BY REVOLUTION (BOOK BEAT) 1970

Sounds like Bobby Seale. I love this guy. He thought we were nuts. We were nuts.

**As minister of information for the White Panther Party, what was your relationship with the Black Panthers like?**

It was tenuous. Like [Seale] says, they thought we were really off the wall. Our slogan was 'Rock 'n' roll, dope and fucking in the streets', and they were talking about free breakfast programmes for children who didn't have anything to eat. We were a bunch of white kids from the working class and the middle class and we didn't have those kind of problems. Our problems with authority were about smoking weed, resisting the draft and our lifestyle. Over time we developed better ideas. We realised that just concentrating on this was missing the point of what the black struggle was about. We really wanted to support the Black Panther Party, that was really our motivation. We'd read everything that Eldridge Cleaver and Huey Newton would say. They said, 'What we need is not for white people to come into the black community. Our problem is white people, so we need these young white people to take their parents off of our backs.' Oh, OK, well we would like to try that. So in the context of a rock 'n' roll show, Jesse would say something about the Black Panthers and how they were our brothers. We would also point out that all of our music came from black people, and that we thought they shouldn't be treated this way by the government and society in general. After a time they came to think that what we were doing was righteous. The first point in our Ten Point Programme was, we support the Black Panther Party and whatever they do. The second point was, total assault on the culture by any means necessary, including rock 'n' roll, dope and fucking in the streets. The one thing they never bring up today is the wonderful sense of humour that the White Panther Party had.

### THE UP

#### "FREE JOHN NOW"

FROM KILLER UP (TOTAL ENERGY) 1971

That's 'Free John Now'. I haven't heard this in years.

#### How did you meet The Up?

This song was made while I was in prison. On the other side is the piece that Allen Ginsberg sent us. We pressed it up as a 45 on Rainbow Records and gave them away at the Freedom Rally in December '71, along with a poster which is now worth about \$800. The Up were like the baby brothers of The MC5. When the Grande Ballroom started in October 1966, Frank Bach, who became the lead singer of The Up, was the MC5 stage manager. My brother was their manager

and we all lived together. When The MC5 went their own way, The Up took over their responsibilities as the band of the organisation... if you can use the word 'organisation' to describe this organic structure.

#### There's a famous photo of the group bearing arms.

Yes, that was part of our propaganda. The Black Panthers told us: 'You can't be no Panthers without embracing the idea of self-defence.' They started by defending people on the street who were being harassed by police. They would come up with a shotgun and a copy of the US Constitution and say to them, 'You can't do this!'

### YOKO ONO & JOHN LENNON

#### "UNFINISHED MUSIC NO 1: TWO VIRGINS"

FROM UNFINISHED MUSIC NO 1: TWO VIRGINS (JACOBY) 1968

This is one of John and Yoko's inventions? Is that Two Virgins? Ah, OK. Boy, it's been 30 years since I listened to this.

#### You dedicated a chapter to it in your book of street/prison writings, *Guitar Army*.

I just thought that them appearing naked on the front was the greatest fucking thing anybody had ever done with an album. Especially Lennon. It was like Jesus Christ taking off his robe and having a joint. It was just exhilarating.

#### Were you an admirer of Yoko Ono as well?

I was into Yoko Ono before she knew Lennon. Most people didn't know who she was, to them she was just some weird older Japanese chick who was taking him away from The Beatles.

#### They supported your cause while you were in prison.

Very much, they came and played at my rally and I got out of prison three days later. Jerry Rubin suggested that they come to Ann Arbor. They came and played and it just turned my whole thing completely around, because we had been fighting for two and a half years to get me out of prison and convince the authorities that my cause was just. These guys came to play for me and I was released. From the minute they announced that John Lennon was coming to Ann Arbor to play for John Sinclair, the whole complexion of the opposition changed.

#### Lennon was also treated very badly by the US authorities wasn't he?

Very badly, and what we learned in retrospect was that it was because of his association with us. The whole scrutiny of Lennon by the government came as a result of him coming to Ann Arbor. We met several times afterwards. We were going to do a big tour together in '72 that was based on this model of a freedom rally we had. It would have involved all kinds of different music, together with community and national activists speaking like Bobby Seale, poets like Allen Ginsberg, folk singers like Phil Ochs, black artists like Archie Shepp and Stevie Wonder; and Lennon loved this. With this tour we wanted to follow Nixon around when he was up for re-election in '72 and haunt him. It would end up outside of San Diego with this three-day free rock festival. Although we never did this, they changed the Republican convention from San Diego to Miami. We were very flattered by that. That's when they started putting the pressure on Lennon, and eventually they drove him half crazy with that shit.

### BUKKA WHITE

#### "PARCHMAN FARM BLUES"

FROM SHIRAZ: YAK ON DOWN (CATFISH) 1940

Now we got to the blues. Is it Bukka White? I grew up on post-war blues, electric blues, so it's a stretch for me to get back into this. My Celtic blues is more Muddy Waters and Elmore James, but I've been studying this for the last 20 years so I know a little bit about it.

**How did your book and accompanying Dike-Tene CD, *Fattening Frogs For Snakes*, come about?**

It was very simple. In 1982 I had not been writing poetry for maybe 15 years. I stopped thinking of myself as a poet around 67, when I got involved with The MCS. Early in 82 my friend Harry Duncan sent me a copy of *Deep Blues* by Robert Palmer. I started copying quotes out of *Deep Blues* into my notebook and they started turning into poetry. I then realised the way these guys spoke was poetry. To me it was heavier than the songs. Then I started writing some little commentaries on what I was reading and it too started coming out in verse. I said, 'Well, I've stumbled on to something here'. All of a sudden I was writing poetry

again. Once I got the first few poems down I thought: This shit is too good to just sit on a piece of paper. If I'm going to get back into writing poetry I would like to set this to music. To me, you write about the things you're passionate about, and there's nothing I'm more passionate about than this music.

**YO LA TENGO  
"NUCLEAR WAR"**

FROM NUCLEAR WAR EP (BANDS OF GOLD)

It's a Sun Ra tune, right? The 12". Is this him or is this a cover?

It's a cover by Yo La Tengo, a group from New Jersey. Really, Yo La Tengo? Out of sight. I don't know these guys

but I know Sonic Youth, they're in the same mindset. The MCS famously played with Sun Ra at the Grande Ballroom.

Yeah, it was thrilling. The first time was 67 and we had the Magic Veil lightshow which was the best light show in Detroit. The combination of the three was fucking overwhelming, but only 100 people came. We didn't make enough money to get the band back to New York, so one of our people drove them there in his Volkswagen van. He was never the same after that. [MCS guitarist] Wayne Kramer was telling me that Sun Ra used to say, 'I've got to keep my eye on The MCS, they're trying to catch up to me.' Wayne said to me, 'We were!' □

# Aktion time vision

Picking up where the slaughter of the Viennese Aktionists left off, Switzerland's Schimpfluch posse's obscene art attack splatters bourgeois propriety with extreme, putrefying noise played on ass trumpets and dead fish. Drew Daniel mops up after Rudolf Ebber, Runzelstim & Gurgelstock, Sudden Infant, OHNE, G\*Park and more





Five years ago, in a San Francisco warehouse space tucked away in the industrial neighbourhood of China Basin, I tried to catch a live performance by Swiss noise act Runzelstirn & Gurgelstock, only to discover that I had shown up late. "The concert's over, but you can take a look at the, uh, remains," snickered one of the warehouse inhabitants. Hoping at least to catch a glimpse of the mysterious individuals involved, I approached the 'stage', which was actually just a card table in the middle of a narrow hall. On the card table: a thermometer and a pile of dead fish, the entrails and foul-smelling ichthyous goo trailing onto the floor. Both baffled and hooked, I made sure to show up on time to their second performance at Club Komotion the following night. Up close, Runzelstirn & Gurgelstock turned out to be one man, Rudolf Eb.er, a bug-eyed, monk-toussured wrath who sat at a piano and played stark, dissonant chords while sobbing his own name. Watching Eb.er's étude of self-loathing, I was struck by his weird resemblance to the Sesame Street character Don Music, a distraught Muppet seated at a piano who would bang the keys with his forehead in artistic frustration and then cry, "Oh, oh, I'll never get it, NEVER!" The character was pulled from the show because of its rather nasty side effect: instead of just getting a laugh, Don Music generated copycat behaviour, leading his young viewers to imitate his headbanging self-punishment. But all these musings were abruptly cut short by a distinct click, as Eb.er produced a very real-looking shotgun, cocked it and pointed it at the crowd. Reactions varied from tense giggles to white knuckle panic; some people scrambled out of the line of fire while others just froze. The shotgun went off at ear-drum-shattering volume. Flooded with adrenaline as our 'fight or flight' systems kicked in, by the time the audience had settled into nervous laughter and some kind of assurance that the gun had fired a blank, Eb.er had sat back down at the keys and carried on with his barnhouse Russian roulette. The knowledge that the lost cartridge was a blank didn't matter a whit to the central nervous system, and I left the club, shaken and re-energised, yet more baffled and hooked than ever. Looking for information on RSG's label Schimpfluch, I found the terse mission statement: "SCHIMPLUCH is a base for groups with therapeutic and/or actionistic background. There is also a monthly radio broadcast, and the distribution of audioworks."

OK, a noise artist namechecking the Vienna Aktionist art movement is nothing new. Thanks to a mixture of misleading press coverage and wildly inaccurate hearsay, the mid-60s performance 'aktions' of Hermann Nitsch, Otto Muehl and Günter Brus, and the films and photographs of Rudolf Schwarzkogler, steadily gained in notoriety throughout the 1970s. More than fact, their legend inspired later generations of experimental musicians: Nurse With Wound mannan Steven Stapleton dedicated his album *To The Quiet Men From A Tiny Girl* to Rudolf Schwarzkogler, "who killed himself in the name of art by successive acts of self-mutilation". In reality, Schwarzkogler committed suicide in despair; the mutilation myth, which was not Stapleton's mistake but a widespread rumour, stemmed from misinterpretations of performance photographs. In America, the Los Angeles Goth-punk scene birthed a briefly active musical outfit called The Hermann Nitsch Memorial Orchestra, mistakenly presuming Nitsch's demise. But no one has taken the Aktionist tradition as a musical blueprint further than Rudolf Eb.er and the extended family of Schimpfluch artists. Meaning 'abuse' in German, Schimpfluch was started by Eb.er in Zürich in 1987. It has gradually expanded to include a larger group of musicians and artists, and the organic scene which has coalesced around it. Although it originated in Switzerland, the emigration of some of its members has since spread the Schimpfluch virus from America



Previous page and opposite: Rudolf Ebber, aka Runzelstirn & Gurgelstock. Above: OHNE

to Japan; and aided by a burgeoning musical catalogue, they now have a worldwide out following. Ebber's reference to the "therapeutic and/or activist background" for his own work is an understatement. In its rituals of bodily abjection and self-exposure, Aktionist art offers a clear precedent not only for Runzelstirn & Gurgelstock's live sonata for piano and shotgun, but for Schimpflich work as a whole. Throughout their work, Schimpflich artists have transposed the tactics and poetics of Vienna Aktionism into sound performances that are often violently confrontational and embarrassing personal. Their recordings, meanwhile, retell live actions into jarringly effective struggles between absolute silence and startlingly violent noise. Far from simply documenting an event, Schimpflich recordings are precisely edited works in their own right, combining the brute physicality of the original performance with a unique, focused approach to editing and collage principles.

#### RUDOLF EBBER/ RUNZELSTIRN & GURGELSTOCK

Ignoring the standard descriptive binaries of music/noise, solo/group, composition/improvisation, Rudolf Ebber regards his live performances and records as *Psycho-Physical Tests And Trainings* (the title of his 1996 CD on Selektion). These audio documents and concerts are largely taken up by an extended, tense silence, punctuated by jarring blasts of voice and the occasional gasped breath. Appropriating the rhetoric of abnormal psychology and the pathological mind as an analogue for extreme sonics is one of the clichés of industrial culture; when Ebber speaks of control and physical discipline, however, he is not so much playing with metaphors as drawing upon his direct personal experience as a martial arts instructor currently living in Japan. Commenting on what "training" in a sonic context means to him, he says (via email): "I studied karate, Thai boxing and I am a teacher of several kung fu styles. The timing as well as the sounds of those combat arts are similar to the cut-up techniques and the use of shocking noise and silence in my audio work as Runzelstirn & Gurgelstock. And even the live actions of 'psycho-physical tests and trainings' I gave as R&G or Schimpflich Aktion Gruppe require some of the same breath techniques as in these martial arts. During an action, parts of the audience join in those techniques – that is training to us." Is he after training the audience into a new doctrine, or to break with their prior training? "We do not care about any behaviours, standards or civilisation," he responds directly. "I don't want new ones. Just none. Bye bye." Ebber's approach to live performance is uniquely unhegged, sidestepping the "boys with their toys" aesthetic typical of the feedback fraternity for slapstick humour carried several stadium lengths beyond the pale. Commenting on his performance for therman and dead fish, he admits that courting and embracing the failure not only to "play music" but even to make any sound at all is part of his intention. Having grown sick of relying upon resistorant equipment, he says, "I decided to tour Japan with nothing but broken cables, adapters, etcetera, which I would plug into something other than black boxes. That was fish. Cables and cables and bloody fish corpses. Instead of turning knobs, I turned fish eyes and as nothing came out anyway, I grabbed the guts out and beat them to get a sound. Acoustic – unplugged. I didn't mean to make fun of standard noise shows, but sure, that was part of the idea."

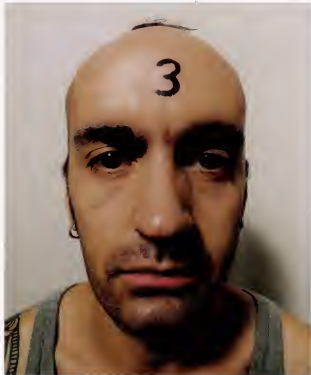
Judging from the responses to his antics with dead fish and shotguns, not everyone is won over. Numerous audience members at the shotgun show walked out in disgust, or simply denounced Ebber's antics as pretentious bullshit. Such violent reactions prompts Ebber to deadpan, "I respect those coming onto the stage to celebrate the action, or those

throwing bottles at me during the action. I don't like those who do that either."

Yet Runzelstirn & Gurgelstock concerts have been known to teeter entirely out of control. As documented on the *Asshole/Smal Dilemma* CD (Toothkit Aleph), Ebber's Tokyo Concert For Strngungstunt And Astrompmet is without a doubt one of the most bloodcurdling listens imaginable. This Mount Everest of musical misery combines increasingly tense sifting squalls whose land peaks recall Pendericci's *Threnody For The Victims Of Hiroshima*, or Xenakis in a particularly foul mood, with cries of ecstatic pain. These are emitted by Kaori Yakushiji, a female participant who apparently has the aforementioned trumpet inserted inside her anus during the performance. Credited as an "actress," it remains unclear whether Yakushiji is genuinely suffering, simulating great suffering, or some unsettling combination of the two. Her torrent of sobs and cries is entirely at odds with the received framework of out vocalising defined by Diamanda Galas, Patty Waters and Margaret De Wys. Where their voices sound like supremely controlled singers pushing the absolute outer limits of their considerable gifts, Yakushiji's "acting" starts with kitsch horror and somehow slides ever inwards, registering the effect of "psycho-physical tests and training" as a regression to an entirely primal level of existence as pain. Ebber, meanwhile, subjects her to an onslaught of violently distorted screams of abuse: "DO YOU THINK THIS IS A JOKE? THIS IS NO FUCKING JOKE! I DON'T CARE ANYMORE!" Like an audio snuff film where fakery actually makes the end results creepier than the premise that it is the real thing, what at first strikes the listener as laughable psychodrama curdles into a deeply depressing re-enactment of domestic violence. By the 16 minute mark Yakushiji sounds barely alive as she struggles to push air through ragged vocal chords. Acting or no, the concert ends in disarray, with Ebber on the run and local police officers in pursuit. The enraged impotence of Ebber's assertions that he is not kidding and that this is not just a joke combined with his accomplice's increasing exhaustion to the point of breakdown, pushes the recording ever closer to the limit of the impossible real.

Why go through with this, or listen to it? The link to Viennese Aktionism is crucial in getting at both the rationale and the potential rewards for such a seemingly baffling, not to mention "unpleasurable" project. In Theo Allenberg's recent memoir, *The Paradise Experiment: The Utopia Of Free Sexuality Friedrichshof Commune 1973-78* (Triton Verlag), he describes the tense exposure achieved during the nightly "self-presentation" events at Otto Muehl's Aktionist commune in Friedrichshof during the 1970s: "In self-presentation, it was a matter of having the courage to go into the middle and make an authentic statement. Muehl usually sat at the piano and started by building up tension, then someone just jumped in at some point, silence, then anything could happen: confession of someone's momentary state of mind or attacks on the audience, or total embarrassment, when the actor froze because of his theatrical duplicity." Seated at the piano, both Don Music and Rudolf Ebber express the same psychodynamic principle that the Vienna Aktionists articulated in their art actions, and which Muehl encouraged at the commune: abreaction. In therapy, abreaction is achieved through the re-enactment of a previously forgotten traumatic event. It activates a temporal relationship to a place of origin, reopening a wound and allowing present and past to temporarily overlap so that a repressed memory can loosen its neurotic hold upon the present. In performance art, the public enactment of a violated taboo unleashes an irruptive effect on bystanders which is at once comically theatrical, ethically challenging, terrifying and viscerally liberating. Not





Joke Lantz aka Sudden Interest

surprisingly, the birthplace of Aktionism in post-war Austria led many to conclude that in obsessively staging scenarios of humiliation and violence, these artists were projecting the wartime crimes of their parents' generation. Reviewing the films created by the Vienna Aktionists in his landmark survey of avant-garde cinema, *Film As A Subversive Art*, Amos Vogel describes "the stench of collective guilt".

As a critical response to postwar modernity, the Aktionists sutured together historical traumas like the Holocaust with the developmental traumas inflicted during the 'socialisation' of children by the repression of their basic drives and instincts. They saw the rational scientific society, which had created both the death camps and the family unit, which conditions the individual to repress his or her drives in order to produce a good clean citizen, as mutually reinforcing disciplinary structures which must be radically subverted. When Brus, Nitsch and Mushi toured campuses staging aktions, the orgasmic energy unleashed by the Aktionists was mirrored by bourgeois Austrian society as the atavistic return of Nazi evil, leading to arrests, newspaper scandal and police harassment. In fact, the Aktionist group, like the dadaists after the First World War, were simultaneously making a revolutionary social critique and exhibiting the growing pains of an already compromised counterculture. Furthermore, Aktionism, like any art movement, consisted of distinct individuals with distinct goals, and grew as much out of painterly and formalist concerns, Catholic mysticism and happenstance as any clearly unified strategy.

#### CHANCE MEETINGS ON A DISSECTING TABLE

Runzelstirn & Gurgelstock concerts seek violent resistance from audience members by combining improvised immediacy, extreme, taboo-breaking behaviour and self-consciousness theatrics. Their recordings collage and compress fragments from multiple concerts, articulating the process of abreaction by inserting temporal breaches across the duration of a performance. In broken but evocative English, Ebner describes his editing process: "In Switzerland I used open reels and scalpel, almost surgical. Cutting, cutting, cutting, sewing back. I dig a hole and stay in there with all those blades, tape and scissors. I didn't want to mix things up, but to put the knife into the sound of what I did and recorded, inside and outside. What you hear on R&G is real. The action and its body. I just cut the body parts, sew them wrong and cut again - in that timing. 15 years of R&G sounds get divided and divided, grow and grow. I grow my sounds 'biologically', like dividing cells. Cut and let grow."

The biggest surprise about the results of these chance meetings on a dissecting table is their formal exactitude and weirdly minimal restraint. Far from sounding like a bug roaring mess that hits a plateau of distorted 'heaviness' and stays there for 70 minutes, Runzelstirn & Gurgelstock records are notable for the extended canyons of silence strategically positioned throughout. This hallmark of contemplative, quasi-religious sound art is given an entirely different quality by its proximity to extreme noise. Neither rhapsodically light, as in Morton Feldman's arcs and caesuras, nor pristine, as in the clinical spaces of Bernhard Günter, the silence in Schimpflich recordings is tense with Pinter-like dread. It is the calculating silence of a cornered animal which has sensed a weakness and is about to lunge. Whether the silence is broken by gunfire, a piano chord or a blast of contact-miked "Vomitspiel" (vomitsplay), it is bracingly intense yet also grotesquely funny, and executed with a forceful momentum that's galaxies away from the comfy terrain of 'glitch as design statement'.

In 1989, Ebner began to find a core of co-conspirators in Zürich. He teamed up with Joke Lantz,



formerly of the hardcore group Jaywalker, collaborating on the monthly *Psychic Rastly* radio show broadcast by Lofa, Zürich's alternative station. The pair were joined shortly thereafter by Dave Phillips, another hardcore defector, formerly of the group Far Of God. In a promiscuous roundelay natural to collective scenes, Eb.er, Lanz and Phillips intermingled in each other's groups and recording projects. Even so, they all have a slightly different understanding of how the Aktionist aesthetic and editing principles of Schimpflich are expressed in their work. Lanz and Phillips are also in Runelstein & Gurgelstock; Joke Lanz records separately as Sudden Infant, with occasional members Phillips and Eb.er; and all three have worked together as The Schimpflich Aktion Gruppe. In addition, Phillips releases Aktionist work under his own name and as a member of the brilliant new group Ohne. Extending the scene's stylistic breadth, Schimpflich also released the more delicate audio work of another *Psychic Rastly* compatriot Marc Zeiler, under the name G\*PARK. Talking on the phone and meeting them in Switzerland, the three Schimpflich members are disarmingly funny and thoughtful people, not at all the forbidding, intense types I was expecting.

## SUDDEN INFANT

As Sudden Infant, Joke Lanz has pushed the Schimpflich aesthetic away from the art gallery and towards the playground. Like the 'Infantile Rock' made by mid-80s hardcore outfits Happy Flowers and Old Skull's nine year old members, Sudden Infant tries to translate the violently loud impulses of childhood into sound, keeping the shouty punk tantrums but replacing the guitars and drums with a trigger happy finger on the pause button of a tape recorder. The result is abrupt *musique concrète* juxtapositions of spasmodic gibbering and a battery of disorienting electronics, offset by oddly lyrical passages of plucked tones and stammering speech. On the *Randomizing CD* (SSM) and the *Sidewalk Social* (Techno Aaleph), photographs of politically militant children and typewritten manifestos ("What interest can it be to us if music lives on as music?") breathe with seething aggression, but the recordings balance this with slapstick humour and junkyard cutzup. Intriguingly, focusing on the mental world of the child is not merely regressive, it stems from Lanz's own experience of parenting—he began Sudden Infant with the birth of his son Celeste in 1989. Recently he has collaborated with saxophonist Nikola Lutz in concerts that involve Aktionism with free improvis. Judging from the recording of a show at Vienna's Rhiz club, it's a hairy experience, free of fish guts but sonically bustling. Lanz's recent focus on brutist totalitarianism has also resulted in 'battle records' of an altogether rougher bent, culminating in a reciprocal remix record entitled *Dense Installs Necessity* (on London label Adverse), which pitted Sudden Infant against UK breakcore extremist Nomes.

## G\*PARK

Even noise kids get the blues, and the Schimpflich collective's church is broad enough to incorporate sound artists who don't walk onstage fully armed. If Rudolf Eb.er is the Johnny Rotten of the Schimpflich scene, then Marc Zeiler is its Nick Drake. Across the three LPs he recorded as G\*PARK—*Sensogramm*, *Yack Park* and *Geopod*—Zeiler has fashioned criminally underrated *musique concrète* masterpieces which adroitly step the often macho brutality of the Swiss Aktionist assault for an autumnal palette of delicately rustling sounds. On the *Sensogramm* track "Baume", for example, the sound of branches of a tree twining in the wind are edited into a work of extreme subtlety and beauty, a sonic equivalent to the latent surreal

poetry sometimes articulated in close-up nature photography. The records are typically accompanied with a cryptic list of recording locations—Trouville, Genoa, Yof, Bley—but leave the gathered sounds tantalisingly private. Zeiler's unique working method underscores his commitment to site-specific sound gathering. He comments, "I often visit an extensive artificial cave system, in the mountain area about two hours from where I live, to perform in and work out new compositions with small acoustic instruments and battery powered devices in this great-sounding cathedral-like space. I remember the day of the Chernobyl disaster, I was working in the cave the same day; the radioactive dust was falling down with the rain, I was completely wet and freezing. The music I made was equivalent."

After abandoning music to concentrate on painting, Zeiler was put out of commission by an injury two years ago. Now recovered, he is currently at work on an installation based on the sound of amplified plankton, and has a new G\*PARK album, *Menode*, forthcoming on the Bordeaux label Sonos. Quietly moving and economical, it is as gently melancholic as his 'labelmates' work is high strung, but the precision of its editing and construction still bears the distinct Schimpflich stamp.

## DAVE PHILLIPS/OHNE

Like Joke Lanz before him, Dave Phillips—half Swiss, half English—brings a furious longpower in keeping with his hardcore background to the Schimpflich aesthetic. But if Lanz understands the mental space of the Vienna aktion as a return to childhood freedoms and frustrations, Phillips regards it as a space in which the category of the human is evaded altogether in favour of an animal consciousness. Via email, he comments, "A live situation is a real-time celebration of the animal nature. The mind becomes a subordinate part of this higher motion. The characteristic elements of a live action are thus embracing and sharing the chaotic nature of life as it could be/should be—shameless expression, reevaluation of values, testing borders and limitations, celebrating blissful love, joyful anger, lustful laughter, existence itself, etcetera."

Such 'testing of limits' has provoked audiences to abreactive extremes. At a notorious French concert, Eb.er and Phillips, in suits and ties, were seated at contact-mixed plates of spaghetti, and proceeded to slam their faces into the food with greater and greater fury, ultimately provoking the audience into a min-ut of hurled beer, fishbats, attacks on the performers and the destruction of props and furniture. But Phillips's onstage frenzy is balanced by a precise editing prowess. He contributed both source material and assemblage duties to what is arguably the most powerful recording of the Swiss Aktionist aesthetic, the collaborative *Messoma/Runelstein & Gurgelstock/Schimpflich Aktion Gruppe* release *Anschloeh-Ohne* (Japan Overseas). Here *Messoma*'s firebreathing screams and the abject gurgles of Eb.er and Phillips are subjected to cartoonish jumpcuts, zapped with sudden piercing tonescapes and eruptions of wordily sinister snickering; then they're gut-punched into silent oblivion, only to rise again and again. A deliciously funny record, it's an inspired pairing of warring sensibilities that upstages po-faced noise-maker seriousness with Punch and Judy gusto.

More recently, Phillips has formed Ohne, an 'all-star' grouping with Daniel Lowenbruck (who presides over the Berlin based noise label 'Techno Aaleph'), Reto Mader and American Tom Smith. Ohne's self-titled debut CD was released this year on their own Ohne label, courtesy of a manufacturing and distribution handshake from Mega. The cover painting by Rudolf Eb.er (an accurate depiction of a pig's heart rendered to

resemble an alien rhinoceros/cow) offers fair warning of the wild and woolly delights within—it was one of 2002's most adventurous records. After a few eerie seconds of silence, you're plunged into five simultaneous domestic squabbles in an overbooked timeshare, where Vienna Aktionists gangle unspensables at the bathroom sink, AMM give the air conditioning a seeping, and the Mega posse are serving striped Powerbooks in a burning kitchen. The group's name is German for 'without'—without shame, perhaps, judging from their maximal soundworld, which incorporates pianos, crouching voices, intimate bodily functions, laser sharp laptop tin 'n' oix, laughter, accordions, severely crumpled field recordings, ticking clocks and chainsaws. Surpassing the body noise/machine noise dichotomy which underwrites the Schimpflich aesthetic, Ohne allow a third element to enter the fray: long song. This element comes courtesy of Tom Smith, familiar to fans of tortuous scree from his tenure in the gloriously deranged American noise underground outfit Peach Of Immortality and to Live And Shave In LA (see The Wire 222). Smith's iggy-like crooning violates (and therefore elevates) the proceedings entirely, adding a third dimension of fleeting emotional intimacy and uncomfortably private songing. Instead of diluting the tension by nodding off towards pop, it actually raises the stakes of the music considerably. The risky personal exposure of his songs can't be achieved by rolling around naked in your own vomit in an art gallery.

Just before finishing this piece, I received a typically effusive, all-caps email from Rudolf Eb.er: "THE LATEST R&G ACTION: A PIECE IN FOUR ACTS: A FEMALE CHORUS SCREAMS DIRECTED BY RUUDOLF, DEEPLY REMINING THESE WOMEN OF THEIR TIME OF BEING BORN OR GIVING BIRTH. AFTER EACH ACT THE MAIN ACTRESS ORINKS OUT A WHOLE GLASS. FIRST A WHITE ORINK, THEN A RED, THEN A BLUE ONE. CURIOUSLY, AFTER EACH ACT, SHE VOMITS—LITRES AND KILOS—HER VOMIT TURNED COMPLETELY PURPLE..."

Over the top of course, but so were the original aktions. The work of the Vienna Aktionists issued a direct challenge to those who witnessed it, posing a threat which has since been largely neutralised by the incorporation of Aktionism into the academy's official story of body art and performance work in the 60s and 70s. The continuing extremity of Schimpflich personnel, their ongoing practice of baffling, outrageous live provocation and the stubbornly abject forms of their recorded work ensure that they remain productively outside the margins of taste and acceptability, still capable of mobility and surprise. □

## SOME RECORDS

### RUUDOLF EB.ER

*Psycho-Physical Tests And Trainings With Rudolf Eb.er And R&G/Schimpflich Personnel* CD (Seikiken)

### RUUDOLF EB.ER/NOHNE

*Die Geopode Des Tink/Tink/Fall Out Of Glass With My Owl* split release CD (PURA disc)

### G\*PARK

*Sensogramm* LP (Schimpflich)

*Yack Park* CD (Zabinski Point)

*Geopod* CD (Zabinski Point)

### MASSOMA/RUNELSTEIN & GURGELSTOCK/

*SCHIMPFLICH AKTION GRUPE*

*Anschloeh-Ohne* CD (Japan Overseas)

### OHNE

*Ohne* CD (Ohne, through Mega)

### DAVE PHILLIPS

*Menode* CD (Techno Aaleph)

### HUNDELSTEIN & GURGELSTOCK

*Asshole/Small Ockema* CD (Techno Aaleph)

### SUDDEN INFANT

*Sidewalk Social* LP (Techno Aaleph)

### NOHNE INFANT/NOHNE

*Turntable Abuse 7" EP* (Adverse)

# Fences and windows



Community collectivism, connection are keywords in Asian Dub Foundation's irresistible assaults on cultural apathy. For in their Community Music roots they have established a broad popular base, musically and symbolically perforating closely guarded borders with agit songs constructed from parts plundered without favour or prejudice from global contemporary, classical and pop traditions.

Words: David Stubbs  
Photos: Jake Walters

I'm midway down Bethnal Green Road, the East London light fading to a grubby mauve, a streetful of the sort of drab, expansive clothing retail outlets whose unfashionability is confirmed by their incorporating the word "fashions" into their names.

Squeezed in here, somehow, is the Rich Mix Cultural Foundation. The East End has a history of diversity stretching back to the 17th century and the first influx of the French Huguenots, to the subsequent establishment of Jewish, Chinese, Bengali and African communities, and this is something the Foundation aims to reflect. Some time later in 2003, this place will be home to a cinema, gallery space, cafe, recording studios and an IT suite for training, communications and study, the sort of establishment that, according to Assen Odo Foundation, exists in "every medium-sized town in France", but is pitifully rare in the UK.

At present, however, it's three floors of vast, empty, plastered rooms, miles of which I trudge through before coming across the single office in which the various members of ADF are milling about, amid visitors, friends and employees. Most of them claim to be knackered following a late night, yet they still bristle with restless energy, swapping beats on headphones, or cracking each other up with a boisterous exchange of jokes. This is the group 'comedian' David Baddiel dubbed "a good band, if almost completely humourless", when they took umbrage at a dumb remark he made about them following the 1998 Mercury Music Awards.

The entry system leaves something to be desired at present, consisting as it does of bellowing "Oi!" from the street down below and hoping to be heard above the office chat. This time, the shouter is Satpal Ram, who has been out to fetch a carton of milk. Satpal Ram was just released from prison in the summer of 2002. He had been incarcerated since 1987, following an incident in which he was set upon by a gang of white racists in a restaurant. Having himself been stabbed in the face with a broken glass, he hit back with a small knife he used at work to open packages. His aggressor, who at first refused medical treatment, later died of his wounds.

A clear case of self-defence, one might think. However, following a woefully inadequate trial, reading details of which brings back memories of the sort of 'justice' meted out to black people in the 1930s Deep South (or present-day Texas for that matter), Ram was sentenced to life imprisonment. A fierce campaign to secure his release ensued in which ADF were heavily involved, culminating in their blistering 1997 single "Free Satpal Ram". However, it was only last year, and in the teeth of opposition from two Labour Home Secretaries, Jack Straw and David Blunkett, that Ram was finally released. Even now he remains 'under licence' and is still fighting to clear his name. Fortunately, on the face of it, he seems anything but broken by his ordeal.

"He's strong and he's still got his wits about him," says DJ and former youth worker John Pandit, aka Pandit G. "But this is just throwing someone's life away after 16 years. He's out, but he's not free."

There are those who vaguely wonder, in this postmodern, post-political era, so long after the End of History, why any group would consider embarrassing themselves by associating themselves so explicitly with 'political' issues. When confronted with a case like Ram's, ADF would retort, how could you not? ADF are unique in having achieved a profile for themselves, despite their unabashed roots in 'community music', a concept which is still likely to excite chorlines and images of well-meaning, bearded ex-Open University

tutors teaching sultry teenagers how to play the triangle. ADF, however, are proof that building from a purportedly unfashionable community base can be as serious and as exciting as your life.

Bassist Dr Das and guitarist Steve 'Chandrasone' Savale, a former member of Birmingham electronic collective Higher Intelligence Agency, were both tutors at Community Music Ltd in London. There, met pupil Deeder and Pandit G, and when DJ Sun-J came aboard in the mid-90s, ADF were born. Their mix of dub, punk, bhanga, Bollywood samples, reggae, rap and driving, galvanising backbeats certainly draws from disparate sources to create an irresistible, not to mention combustible whole that has made for four crucial studio albums (including the new *Enemy Of The Enemy*, out next month) and the live *Conscious Party*. However, they detest the use of the word 'eclectic', with its implication that certain elements, certain cultures, don't really belong together. ADF's music asserts itself as a natural reflection of its members' heritage, and whatever else is to hand. Their influences spread from Sun Ra ('he had a great message and he did lots of stuff for people locally, community projects,' says Chandrasone) to The Fall ('They always struck me as 'after the Holocaust' music, a sort of future-people music,' says self-styled 'world's biggest Fall fan' Pandit G).

What's more, when it comes to musical sources they have no qualms about distinctions between authentic and unauthentic, pure and bastardised, sacred or profane. They've performed alongside master oud players and mixed with all strains of 'World Music' while on their travels. 'I'm a Rastafarian,' says *Enemy Of The Enemy*'s lead guitarist, the one-time UK underground bhangra DJ. Das was steeped in Indian classical music as a child. Yet when it comes to tensions between traditional and modern, he says, 'It's really not something we think about. I mean, turntables are pretty traditional now. A lot of that is tied down with ideas of 'proper' and 'improper' sounds. Once, the sounds that came out of an electric guitar were considered 'improper' sounds. Everyone in the band, as well as what they do on stage, is also a composer and programmer. What we say is, if you can hear it, then it's real. It's all about composition and ideas.'

Despite the level of international success ADF have enjoyed, their major label status (first with London Records and now Virgin France), and the fact that group commitments have meant that Chandrasone and Dr Oas have been able to spend less time with Community Music, they continue to abide by their original principles. For instance, they have been unsuccessful for diversifying resources to their side project ADFED, the group's 'educational wing', of which Pandit G is a member. ADFED holds regular sound system events and music technology workshops, born out of the recognition that there is an 'immense amount of musical talent' happening out there. New strains of subterranean electronics are developing at hyperspeed yet their semi-legitimate status restricts them to a single outlet via pirate radio stations and other subterranean channels. Pandit G bemoans the present, patronising structure of arts funding and its de haut en bas nature – and by way of protest, he recently refused an MBE (Master of the British Empire), awarded for his work with Community Music.

'Anything that's vaguely to do with black projects, it's ten times as hard to get money out of the lottery, or arts funders,' he says. 'But it'll happen. And it needs to happen, you've got the City there, encroaching on both sides of us here in Bethnal Green Road and they're going to meet in the middle. Vacant properties and bits of land are hard to come by. And the centrality

of Rich Mix is important, too. Quite often, what happens is that community projects get shunted onto industrial estates and nobody goes there.'

Repper Deeder has since left ADF. However, the group's line-up has now expanded to include a new drummer, percussionist and two new MCs, Akter and Spex. More than ever, Dr Das insists on talking up ADF as a collective. 'People talk about the 'key members', he asserts. 'We don't have any key members. Whatever anyone contributes is important, otherwise why is it there?'

I wonder whether they feel they have much in common with the London Musicians' Collective, the experimental music organisation with whom they shared office space in a warehouse on Farringdon Road called Community Music, until the building was closed down in 1996. 'They were in the same building, but I wouldn't say we were particularly involved with them,' mutters Chandrasone. Or Das, it transpires, has a beef about the 'intellectual bigotry' of certain brands of extreme experimental music, and what he sees as the 'closed, exclusive circle of people' who practise it.

'We love experimental music but we want more people to do it,' he declares. 'I love Miles Davis, Alice Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Can – but I want to talk to people who are into drum 'n' bass and Garage. Talk to them about Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman. We're highly experimental musicians but we've always made an effort to make it accessible. That was always the great thing about dub music for me. It's people's music. It's sound systems, goes over huge sound systems, it's abstract but not abstract in this really radical idea, which is a melodic bassline, something that's anathema to Western pop traditions: it represents a sonic invasion.'

'Also,' adds Chandrasone, 'the problem with some of what's labelled avant garde is that a lot of it, in its own way, is as revivalist as Oasis. I remember going to a few so-called avant garde events and it'd be someone playing a tube out of tune and thinking, 'This was done 40 years ago'. So it's actually even more revivalist than Oasis!'

On reflection, however, Dr Das agrees that ADF and the LMC do have a 'senuous connection' – the late drummer John Stevens, founder of Community Music. 'I was just reading an old edition of *The Wire* and it had an article with Steve Beresford [issue 218], talking about making a film with Stevens's daughter about him, interviewing all the people who knew him. And one of the points that came forward from that interview for me was the way his philosophy filtered through to what ADF are doing. We got on with things and we don't really analyse what we're doing too much, but we realised that what we learned from John Stevens is that that's actually how we work, on a collective basis, with a lot of improvisation, employing the principles of improvisation even if the musical context is different. We've honed it right down to three minute pop structures, but even within that, and especially with a bigger band, there's a lot of people playing off each other and a lot of listening going on. John always emphasised listening. The idea of collectivity, where everybody is allowed to suggest an idea.'

Like a model, or metaphor, for an ideal way of living. 'Yes, that's right,' replies Chandrasone. 'Where everybody is expressing themselves individually within a collective aim.'

ADF's latest album, *Enemy Of The Enemy*, is the first to feature the new line-up. But the approach – that is to say, full-on attack – is similar to the previous albums. 'Rise To The Challenge', with its tidal

backbeat, rapid-fire mic exhortations and Chandrasone's buccannery, white noise guitars creating a singulare surge which is sustained throughout the album. Ed O'Brien of Radiohead adds touches of 'infinite sustain' guitar on three tracks, including the title track. Adrian Sherwood was drafted in as executive producer, lending ADF's beats a significant upgrade. His own touch is to the fore on the album's centrepiece, the stately, impassioned, dub-drenched '1000 Broken Mirrors', featuring the voice of Sinead O'Connor, inspired by the fate of Zora Shah, a Muslim, Bradford-based woman currently serving a life sentence for the murder of one Mohammed Akram following years of abuse at his hands, the song benefits from O'Connor's treatment. No longer able to belt songs out the way she used to, her hoarse, strained, almost cracked vocals convey all the better the sheer sense of emotional exhaustion and desperation at the heart of this appalling story.

'Fortress Europe' is symptomatic of ADF's present-day global thinking, dealing with the fear, loathing and obstruction directed from within Western Europe towards asylum seekers, despite the European Commission's own research confirming that as populations age and dwindle in those nations, economic migrants are destined to become a necessity, not a burden. 'It isn't just immoral, but economically irrational to talk about asylum seekers the way that they do,' argues Chandrasone. 'Britain needs skills, labour. And the reason people keep on moving on the way they do is because of the particular world order we have. We're told by our parents, the media, that that's the way to be free, we've got to globalise, be flexible, blah, blah, move with the time. But one of the effects of the economy is to do the same to populations. And while the borders for money aren't there, the borders for people are higher than ever. And no asylum seekers are ever spoken to. I saw one article once about a school in Glasgow where all these people who'd been hostile to asylum seekers were now really pleased with them because the kids were highly motivated and the local school had shot up the league table as a result.'

'I hope the song is actually quite stirring,' he continues. 'You know, rip up the vouchers, break out of the centres, come on over! Use everything you've got to get in!'

From Bethnal Green to Brazil, ADF are a living enactment of the 'think globally, act locally' principle. In the mid-90s, they loathed the perched Btropic scene, which at a time when both Jungle and bhangra were springing up and cross-fertilising with rapid intensity, was promulgating what appeared suspiciously to some like a wishfulness for an all-white 60s jangly funk scene. And they're unlikely to be appeased by the 2003 release of *Live Forever*, a documentary film about the Btropic years which, fashion designer Oswald Bostang apart, does not feature a single black face. Their own outlook is unwaveringly futurist, in the great black tradition of Hendrix, Clinton, Sun Ra, Afrika Bambaataa, A Guy Called Gerald and contemporaries like State Of Bengal and Charged – understandable, since fond nostalgia is not the emotion that leaps into the bosoms of most black people when contemplating the recent privations of the past.

They're also internationalist: all the more so

ADF at Rich Mix Cultural Foundation, London, 29 November 2002. Left to right: MC Spex, Pandit G, Dr Das, Rocky, Chandrasone, Sun-J

"Politics isn't just about  
belonging to a party or taking  
part in a demonstration. It  
might simply be about deciding  
to get up in the morning after  
lying in bed for three weeks.  
Thanks to the music."



nowadays, since signing to Virgin France. "Britain is just another territory for us nowadays," smiles Chandrasekhar. One of their most recent projects was to compose and perform a new live soundtrack for the Mathieu Kassovitz film *La Haine*, about Parisian ghetto life, which they have since performed at prestige festivals such as the Barbican's Only Connect and the South Bank's Melttdown, and which, touch wood, will be included on the film's DVD release.

Although their moniker asserts their Asian-ness, that, they say, is simply a mark of where they come from. Unlike Fun-Da-Mental, who in their earliest incarnation alarmed many with their anti-Salman Rushdie remarks, ADF are secular in their approach.

"There's a whole range of religious opinions within this group, prominent among them is atheism," says Dr Das. Nor do they feel any particular duty to foist their Asian-ness on the world as a cultural imperative, still less cash in on the current, spicy vogue for all things Asian. The track "Cyberabad" on the new album celebrates the city of Hyderabad in Central South India, home to scientific inquiry and hi-tech innovation. However, it's only this year that they've decided that the time is right to tour India. They've felt no great ambassadorial obligation to do so.

Moreover, they don't have any particular cultural 'inside track' as regards 11 September 2001, except to remark acerbically that it has provided another excuse for world leaders to erode civil liberties, drum up propaganda for war with Iraq, fan paranoia and stigmatise people of brown skin, all themes dated to on the album's title track. For instance, says Pandit G, "When you see the circumstances of this so-called 'gas attack' on the Tube, these Algerians (referring to several reported London arrests made in November 2001), it's somewhat different. It was based on the possible suspicion that maybe if they knew the right people they might be able to get some gas and maybe they'd intend to release it on the Tube. It's just smoke and rumours."

Elsewhere, on "Blowback", they expound the accurate, if admittedly not entirely helpful line taken by the far left on 11 September – that the US administration is paying the wages of past foreign policy sins.

More significantly, ADF have toured extensively internationally, generally well off the beaten promotional track. One of the many 'new connections' they've made was playing live in Cuba. "We went out there beforehand with a couple of videos and a CD which they showed on rotation and we had 5000 people turn up," recalls Chandrasekhar. "And the DJ from the main Havana radio station told me that The Manic Street Preachers [one of the rare Western pop acts to play there] had to have people bussed in to fill out the venue..."

"We did have a Cuban-first policy," he continues. "We only charged 20 pesos to get in, so that it wasn't restricted to whoever had dollars."

They also went to Brazil at the invitation of the British Council, an invitation they regarded as pleasantly ironic, considering what 'Britshness' had come to mean, in the Britpop sense, only a few years earlier. In his diary of the event on the ADF Website, Chandrasekhar writes with humbled joy about visiting projects in the favelas, or shanty towns of Rio, witnessing breathtaking musical/theatrical events worked up from zero resources, against a backdrop of poverty and gangland violence. Their experiences inspired *Enemy Of The Enemy's* "19 Rebellions", about a brutally crushed attempt by Brazilian prisoners to stage a coordinated mass breakout.

ADF have also played in Eastern Europe, in Budapest

and twice in Serbia. "Not many people go there," says Chandrasekhar, "because most tours are linked with trying to sell new releases. But it's awesome, the level of enthusiasm. We had our biggest ever ADF gig in Serbia. 8000 people. Again, while they're lacking in resources, they're pulling out all the stops to put on a fantastic show."

A little taken aback, I wonder if they weren't worried about, or had encountered, any of the racism which blights Eastern Europe, as encountered recently by black British footballers in Slovakia, for instance. That antagonism reputedly caused the subsequent misbehaviour of English fans. A guffaw from Dr Das nearly brings the roof off the place. "I thought that was a bit rich coming from England, the country which invented racism in football!"

"Historically, there has been and still is a lot of conflict there," concedes Chandrasekhar. "The latest thing is Vojvodina demanding autonomy. And we had people at the gig from Slovenia and Croatia having to pay \$150 to get visas to get into Serbia. But I think in Eastern Europe generally, there's quite a lot of positivity amongst younger people about music as a means of rebuilding. Especially in Serbia."

Music as a means of rebuilding... by all accounts, on their travels ADF have encountered innumerable, heartwarming, engendering examples of what they call "media-underdeveloped" countries making such positive and life-affirming connections. In the decidedly media-overdeveloped UK, it occurs to me, as the late afternoon winter darkness sets in, that such activism and positivism is rare. It's hard, not least for people who should know better, the supposed intelligentsia, to fight their way out of the miasma of postmodern cynicism and political apologetism, the fuzzy logic of apathy that comes with the unsatisfactory comfort of these New Labour times. There are so many excuses to opt out, to flip back into a state of disaffected indifference, to dally with intellectual misgivings about the sanguine certainties of an ADF that result in... doing nothing, a sort of shameful, able-bodied disengagement.

"I think British culture generally has had this postmodern ironic thing, the idea that nothing can really move you..." says Chandrasekhar. "That's the point, isn't it: we are confronted with a whole lot of propaganda and fears and worries and the 'war on terrorism' – and we're in a time when we've come out of the era when the world was split between the West and the Soviet Union and now the fortresses are being built around the issue of Islam as a new Great Enemy. And so you've got this paranoia that's almost as big as the 50s and is disabling."

In these otherwise depoliticised times, do ADF feel they're carrying a lone torch? The thing is, we're saddled with this sense of being on a mission but to us it's really quite natural," protests Chandrasekhar. "Imagine if cinema was restricted in subject matter the way that pop music is right now, where there are only a few lyrical concerns you're allowed to have – ego, how much money you've got, sex, hedonism. Which is all fine. But imagine if movies were restricted that way. The only thing that would get made was American Pie. What is the big deal about what we're doing? It's just the era that we're in."

There are various reasons for the collapse of polemical pop – the triumph of marketing agendas over other, more radical ones. The fact that most of the major contemporary movements belong to part of ancient history, even rarer, the last convulsion of dissent, which issued its own call to arms against the Criminal Justice Bill in 1992, is an issue of ever-

diminishing relevance for anyone coming through their teenage years nowadays. The collective embarrassment over the failure of the mid-80s Labour-linked collective Red Wedge, which persuaded the likes of Paul Weller not to bother anywhere and to stick to the 'politics' of the romantic/personal, resulted in the depolarisation of British politics. But there was also a difficulty about the sort of signifiers which used to be insisted on in 80s agit-pop. Whether it was Billy Bragg's mock-Arthur Mullard cloth-cap vocals or the rather clipped, austere, dry funk mannerisms of groups like The Redskins or The Style Council, they embodied a fear of musical extravagance, as if that would represent a sonic version of 'champane socialism'. Chandrasekhar insists that Asian Dub Foundation suffer no such inhibitions.

"With us, the radicalism is integrated into the music," he declares. "Not to knock any of the acts involved in Red Wedge, but musically they were quite middle of the road. For me, Public Enemy got it, seriously right. They sounded like they were from the future. They were futuristic-sounding records, a real force, musically and visually. Radical art's got to be radical sounding, radical looking – at the same time without becoming avant garde, up its own bottom."

Furthermore, just as old leftists used to insist that, no, really, Nicaraguan coffee really was very good once you got used to the taste, there's a guilt about admitting that politics like, say, Chumbawamba don't have much to offer musically beyond the tubthumping they ironically acknowledge in their biggest hit. To do so is as childish as criticising Lenin's brown boots as he rallies the workers on his triumphant return to Moscow. ADF, by contrast, could, if you chose, be enjoyed as pure hedonism, never more so than when they're grooving live. But whilst they have been about taking our technology out and making it work in a live situation, not just about creating a track or a product," insists Dr Das. "It's more about expression and expressing it in a public space."

Whereas so much electronic offers only the static spectacle of mere onstage sound engineering; whereas much independent rock has sunk into wan MDR inertia; and with dance music reduced to the choreographed sham of the 'live' RA, ADF are shock troops in the war against despair and inevitability, reflectively dynamic, be it in Chandrasekhar's low-slung swagger, Pandit G's DJing tussles, or Suni's elegant pop dancing. It's live that ADF reinforce the sort of abstract nouns which inform them – community, activism, collectivism, connection; on stage where they defy the complex, structural forces which have depoliticised and de-energised an entire generation; drag us out of our esoteric cocoons; slip us about the face a bit and create a sense of 'we' again.

ADF prove that something can be done by going out and actually doing it – just ask Satpal Ram. As Chandrasekhar puts it, those who say that nothing can be 'changed' are operating by a very narrow definition of the word. "Politics isn't just about belonging to a party or taking part in a demonstration," he asserts. "It might simply be about deciding to get up in the morning after lying in bed for three weeks. Thanks to the music."

"We're long term optimists and short term pessimists," insists Dr Das. "My pessimism might last half an hour! Real change takes a lifetime, it takes generations. But you've got to do your little bit. We're not necessarily going to see the fall of the Roman Empire in our lifetimes, but..."

"We might do," interrupts Pandit G. "Yeah!" agrees Dr Das, buoyantly. "We might!" □ *Enemy Of The Enemy* is released on 3 February on Virgin France

"While the borders for money aren't there, the borders for [asylum seekers] are higher than ever. Rip up the vouchers, break out of the centres, come on over! Use everything you've got to get in!"



# Life with the lions

A black and white photograph showing a close-up of a person's hand playing a piano. The hand is positioned over the keys, which are visible in the foreground. In the background, a film reel is partially visible, suggesting a connection to cinema or art. The overall composition is artistic and moody.

In France during the early 1950s, a millionaire modern art dealer bankrolled a brace of initiatives designed to promote some of the most radical American musicians of the post-war era, including Albert Ayler, Sun Ra, La Monte Young and Terry Riley. In Paris, Edwin Pouncey meets Daniel Caux, the creative force behind these utopian outposts of underground art: the Shandar label and the Nuits De La Fondation Maeght concert series.

Photos: Philippe Gras/Eye Control





As we enter the living room of Daniel Caux's immaculate apartment in the middle of Paris, it's obvious that our subject has prepared for our visit. A handful of LPs have been pulled from Caux's vast record collection, which lines the room, and stacked neatly along one wall. The names on the sleeves are familiar, but these records, which constitute virtually the entire catalogue of a small label called Shandar, haven't been seen outside of hardcore collectors' circles since they were released some three decades ago. Next to the records are piled various back issues of *L'Art Vivant*, a short-lived modern art magazine which, like Shandar, was funded by the French industrialist and art collector Aimé Maeght, and for which Daniel Caux wrote a number of buccaneering articles on free jazz and minimalist music during the early 1970s.

It was through those articles that Caux managed to connect with some of the most important musicians of the post-war avant garde. Using funds supplied by Aimé Maeght, Caux issued a series of landmark recordings by Albert Ayler, Sun Ra, Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Terry Riley and La Monte Young, whose names and faces now stare out at us from that line of records stacked against the far wall. Maeght's money also funded a series of concerts Caux promoted at a private art museum in the south of France that have become the stuff of legend in free jazz and minimalist circles.

As his impressive CV testifies, over the last 30 years Caux has continued to champion new music through journalism and broadcasting, as well as by promoting major European concerts by Harry Partch, Glenn Branca, Harold Budd, Jon Hassell, Moondog and many others. In the early 70s he made a field recording trip through Algeria and later produced records for Radio France's ethnic recordings label Occa. Recently he made a series of programmes about new electronic music for France Culture called *Hypnomototechno*, in the process interviewing Derrick May, Kevin Saunderson, Carl Craig, Richie Hawtin and others. But today we are here to talk about his work during the halcyon days of free jazz and minimalism, which emerged from the moment he started out as a visual artist in the turbulent political, social and creative climate of Paris in the mid-1960s.

Daniel Caux's first ambition was to be a painter. In the early 1960s he studied fine art at the *École des Arts Appliqués* in Paris, and with fellow avant garde artists Jean-Jacques Lebel and Ben Vautier he was a member of the French branch of George Maciunas's Fluxus movement. During this period Caux's interests outside of painting included watching underground movies and listening to a wide range of esoteric music that included Indian and Arabic music, early US minimalists such as Terry Riley and La Monte Young, and the new jazz of Eric Dolphy, John Coltrane and Albert Ayler. For Caux, hearing Albert Ayler's early ESP-Disk recordings was an experience that would change his life. "I had such a shock when I first heard Albert Ayler on ESP-Disk that I stopped painting, because I thought that my art should be as great and amazing as his music," he enthuses. "Hearing him play on record turned my whole world around."

Fired by the clamor call for social and artistic freedom that he heard blasting from Ayler's tenor saxophone, and anticipating his future life as a promoter, producer and organiser, a highly evolved enthusiast who made things happen, the young artist attempted to stage a festival that would celebrate this burgeoning American music. Drawing on his Fluxus connections, Caux planned the festival as a multimedia event with input from Jean-Jacques Lebel who, as well as being involved with Fluxus, had links with New York's experimental Living Theatre group.

"He did a lot of happenings," remembers Caux, "including one where he appeared completely naked

apart from a face mask of General de Gaulle, Leibel started to organise these happenings in Paris as early as 1964, where he once invited Enc Dolphy to come over and play at his apartment.

"In 1966 we planned to bring Albert Ayler and La Monte Young over to perform in Paris," he continues. "Unfortunately this never took place because of financial problems. You could apply for money from the Ministry of Culture, but at that time they saw free jazz and new music as being subversive and refused to give any money to the project."

It would be another four years before Caux was able to officially invite Albert Ayler to perform in France. But the saxophonist did appear at George Wein's Paris Jazz Festival later that year, with a group comprising his brother Donald Trumpet, violinist Michael Sampson, bass player William Folwell and drummer Beaver Harris. During the festival the Ayler group played two concerts that were met with decidedly mixed reactions. Caux, however, was spellbound. "On 13 November 1966 he played with his brother Donald for half an hour on a revue called 'The Story Of Jazz'," he recalls. "Ayler was playing at the end of that and the people there did not understand what he was doing. During this first concert he was booed by the audience, it was like a battle. The second concert was at midnight with only myself and a few people present."

The thrill of that late night Paris concert (which was eventually released by the hat Hut label as part of the *Lórrach/Paris 1966* album) only intensified Caux's passion and enthusiasm for the music of Ayler and the entire free jazz movement, which was becoming more readily available as American musicians began to head for Europe in search of work and the kind of attentive audiences that had been denied them back in the States. Caux was not alone in thinking that there was a need for free jazz to establish itself in Paris, and soon he was being commissioned to write articles about the music for magazines such as *Combat* and the more radical *Jazz Hot*. When Caux and Leibel's proposed music happening failed to materialise, they screened a selection of work by underground film makers, including Andy Warhol, Jonas Mekas and George and Michael Kuchar. The response to this alternative happening was positive and helped establish Caux's name as an organisational talent in the city's avant-garde art scene; by 1968 he was promoting one day free jazz concerts with such exiled musicians as Frank Wright, Noah Howard and The Art Ensemble Of Chicago, who had flocked to Paris in the wake of Ayler's legendary performances. It was around this time that a friend recommended him to the exclusive French art magazine *L'Art Vivant*, which was financed by the multimillionaire businessman and art collector Aimé Maeght. This friendship between the wealthy patron of the arts and the enthusiastic Caux would give both parties the freedom to realise their dreams.

Aimé Maeght's lifetime interest in the arts was fostered by his friendship with the French modernist painter Pierre Bonnard. Maeght was also friends with Matisse, and in 1945 he opened a gallery in the Rue de Téhéran in Paris which quickly became one of the most important venues to view and buy works of modern and contemporary art, staging exhibitions by Bonnard, Matisse, Miró, Chagall, Calder, Giacometti and others. Over the next two decades Maeght amassed one of the largest private collections of modern art in the world, and in 1964, with help from his wife Marguerite, he financed the impressive Maeght Foundation, an art museum in Saint Paul de Vence near Cannes in the south of France.

As well as being a showcase for the visual arts, Maeght wanted the Foundation to act as a stage for contemporary music and dance. In 1967 he began to put on concerts at the Foundation under the banner

Nuits De La Fondation Maeght. Although by this point he was in his early sixties, Maeght's ear for new music was as sharp as his eye for modern art. In July 1969 he invited The Cecil Taylor Quartet (with alto saxophonist Jimmy Lyons, percussionist Andrew Cyrille and saxophonist Sam Rivers) to perform a series of concerts at the Foundation which provided an unprecedented platform for Taylor's music, and reinforced Maeght's reputation as a visionary patron of the living arts.

Impressed by the articles on free jazz and minimalist music that Caux was now writing for *L'Art Vivant*, Maeght contacted him early in 1970 and asked him to coordinate a series of Nuits De La Fondation Maeght concerts based on this new American music. "There were in total four concerts," says Maeght, a modern composer who was responsible for all of the programming. "explains Caux. "Maeght said to him, 'Yeah, but what about all the people we are talking about in the magazine, like Albert Ayler, Sun Ra and the minimalists, why are they not performing at the Nuits?' Miroglio was unsure about their music because it was too new, so that's when Maeght contacted me to direct the 'underground' part of the Nuits as a special event. I organised this event for Maeght myself because the other people from the Foundation were against the idea."

Caux programmed the series with the help of a friend of Aimé Maeght's called Chantal Oercy. "Chantal was young, full of energy and enthusiasm but not a specialist in music, so she asked me to help her," Caux explains. "I became the head of programming and Chantal organised the business side; the tips, the fees and everything."

I invited Ayler and Sun Ra to the Nuits, and also Miroglio to give the concerts," but at that time he was teaching music at a school in Harlem and it was not possible for him to attend. I invited La Monte Young and Marian Zazezela and Terry Riley. La Monte Young told me that he would be glad to attend, but he wanted to play for a whole week. So we set something up for him on the roof of the Foundation."

For Young and Zazezela, their eighth day *Dream House* rooftop installation was the first time their music had been performed in France. Caux dutifully documented the proceedings, and *L'Art Vivant* later published a special edition devoted to Young. Pieces played during the eight days included a section of *The Tortoise*, *His Dreams And Journeys* and *Map Of D's Dream*. The two Systems Of Eleven Sets Of Galactic Intervals Ornamental Light Years Trilogy with Young, Zazezela and saxophonist John Gibson being joined, from time to time, by violinist David Rosenbloom and Terry Riley on additional vocals. In the evenings Zazezela provided a lightshow to illuminate the proceedings.

The *Dream House* presentation proved to be one of the highlights of the Nuits concerts that year, and for Caux it represented a massive breakthrough in his efforts to get the music of these minimalists taken seriously. "It was mainly through being involved with Fluxus and George Maciunas that I was introduced to the minimalist music school," he explains. "I knew La Monte Young, though, before joining the French Fluxus group. I had met John Cage and asked him if he thought La Monte Young was an important musician in America and Cage told me he was."

In a fascinating interview with Cage that was published in *L'Art Vivant's* issue on Young, the composer tells Caux and his wife Jacqueline that he was particularly impressed by two of Young's early works from 1960: his *Fluxus* related *Poem For Tables, Chairs And Benches*, etc, which Cage performed in New York, and 2 Sounds for magnetic tape, in which one sound was produced by the friction of metal on glass and the other by metal on wood, both at high volume. "La Monte lived in San Francisco at the time," Cage explained to the couple, "and despite the

distance of two or three thousand miles you could feel the power of the music. Listening to these pieces was for me an experience that changed my way of listening," he confessed, "of listening to everything."

Not everybody shared Caux's enthusiasm for the new music he was busily promoting and presenting. His proposed series of concerts was met with a small pocket of resistance from those connected to Maeght, the most notable being the jazz record producer and arranger Norman Granz, who wrote to Maeght saying that he had been "ill advised" to allow Albert Ayler and Sun Ra to play at the Foundation, as, in his opinion, neither were "serious" musicians or artists.

"Granz knew Maeght because Duke Ellington had previously come to play for the Foundation, so they were in touch," recalls Caux. "Maeght understood what he was telling him, that Granz thought Ayler and Sun Ra were troublemakers, but Maeght was very supportive towards me. In his twenties he had been a drummer in a jazz group, that was in the 1930s, so Maeght already had this musical sensitivity. Then through the articles that I was writing about free jazz he became very interested in the music. Maeght was also very polite to all the musicians. Because he was used to dealing with painters like Miró and Matisse he treated Ayler and Sun Ra in the same fashion, like artists."

When Albert Ayler took the stage for the first of his two Nuits De La Fondation Maeght concerts on 25 July 1970, the reception he received from the large audience was ecstatic. With a new group consisting of his wife Mary Marie Parks on saxophone and vocals, pianist Cal Cobb, bass player Steve Tintwines and drummer Alan Blumstein, Ayler's music was a kind of spellified free jazz that took in tragic ballad readings, New Orleans funeral marches and traces of the blues. It was the relationship between Ayler and the veteran piano player Cal Cobb, however, that gave the two concerts their edge. As Cobb told writer Val Wilmer in 1971: "The rest of the people [in the group] were in another bag and I didn't understand. They would talk fist-talk and I said, 'What is this?' But Albert was very sincere and it was like a Bible to him."

For both concerts Ayler appeared in a series of flamboyant outfits, the most spectacular being a long white robe which he complemented with a broad brimmed black hat. Photographer Philippe Grasz, who managed to capture the extraordinary vision on film, is still reeling from the aftereffect that Ayler's appearance had on him: "To have the man in front of you and to be able to observe the stature of the man as he performs is something else. He was like a living monument to jazz."

Caux's friends remember his meeting with Ayler among the friendships they formed during the days he was living in France. "After the concerts at the Fondation he stayed with me for six days, just hanging out. Maeght had given him the use of a car so that he could drive around if he wanted. He was very gentle, very intelligent, and the concerts he played were very special. I liked him very much and we connected. When he was found dead four months after the Maeght concerts I spent a month trying to find out how it happened."

Two weeks after the Ayler group's triumphant appearances the Foundation staged a series of concerts with Sun Ra and his Arkestra. These took place on 3 and 6 August 1970 during the Arkestra's

Previous page: La Monte Young soundscapes Terry Riley's equipment. 1972. The page: Sun Ra & The Arkestra. 1970 (above); Terry Riley. 1972 (below). Following page, clockwise from top: Albert Ayler, Steve Tintwines and Mary Marie Parks, 1970; Philip Allen and John Davis, 1970; John Cage, 1970; John Cage, 1970; John Cage in Paris, circa 1970-71. Unless otherwise stated, all photos taken at the Maeght Foundation, Saint Paul de Vence during the Nuits De La Fondation Maeght concert series.



European tour. The response they received at Saint Paul de Vence was ecstatic, and Caux's description of Ra and his Arlestra in action captured the atmosphere of the concerts perfectly. "[The audience is] shuttled before a spectacle that surpassed in every way anything they could have imagined," he later wrote. "Films are projected behind the musicians; these include vistas of New York and Chicago, street scenes, Arlestra rehearsals, rockets to the moon, Egyptian gods or plumed Amazon warriors. Lights are filtered on to the stage or illuminate it strongly while Sun Ra's organ throws lightning bolts. Dancers brandish emblems or symbolic objects. From this surge of collected improvisation, emerges the alien sonority of a bass clarinet, or six flutes playing in unison to a theme intoned by a choir, or a few appealing piano notes to the howling of a Moog synthesizer; thus the music takes on varied and unpredictable aspects. Then suddenly one of the musicians jumps over a luminous glass sphere which only moments before had been supposed to represent the all powerful sun."

The success of the concerts by Ayler and Ra boosted Caux's confidence about the future of the music he had now become a part of. "The atmosphere at the Nuits was created by the people who loved these artists and came to see them perform," he reminds me. "At least 80 per cent of the audience were fans of Sun Ra and wouldn't have missed the concerts for anything in the world. When Albert Ayler first came to Paris in 1965 people booed him and there was a big scandal. After May 1968, however, in the wake of the student protests, the underground movement went almost mainstream. It was a bit like Techno now, where it suddenly became mainstream and opened up to a larger audience. Many of the people who attended the Nuits didn't have access to this kind of music before 1968."

Once the Nuits De La Fondation Maeght series had ended, Maeght approached Caux with the suggestion that, as the event had been filmed and recorded, a new label should be set up to document the series. Maeght invited Chantal Darcy to join Caux in running the new label; her first contribution was to donate her name (CHANtial DARcy) to the project, which became known as Shandar.

Although Caux says Maeght funded the setting up of the label, according to Charnéne Palestine, who would later release one album on Shandar, there was another benefactor involved. "Philippe Lete was the husband of Chantal Darcy whom she had recently married," he explains, "a young lawyer from Montreal who was working between France, Geneva and Canada. Together they began to approach people and asked them to propose pieces for possible release on their new label. Although Shandar was Chantal's baby, Philippe had, in my opinion, a very important role. Chantal was the art snob, while he was a down to earth, very humorous and sincere guy. I think Philippe put up most of the money for Shandar to help them realise their dream of running a record company."

Shandar's office was located at 40 Rue Mazarine, a small gallery space in Paris where Caux and Darcy worked together on a catalogue of immediate and future releases. The first to emerge were the recordings of the Ayler and Sun Ra Nuits concerts, which Shandar issued as separate two record sets. These were lavishly packaged in full colour gatefold sleeves, with the designs incorporating striking photography taken during the concerts by Philippe Gras and Claude Gaupin. At Aimé Maeght's suggestion, Wilma, a Stockholm recording taken from his mammoth *Aus Den Sieben Tagen*, and a three record set of Cecil Taylor's 1969 concert for the Fondation, were also scheduled for release. "The

admiration and passion that Maeght had for Cecil Taylor was almost sexual," laughs Caux.

Shandar provided an outlet for Caux's continuing passion for free jazz, permitting him to release new albums by the former Albert Ayler drummer Sunny Murray and the French piano player François Tusques. More importantly, the label gave him the opportunity to commission and release new works by many major names in the American minimalist movement, whose music up to that point had been virtually impossible to find on record. Early minimalist works issued by Shandar included Steve Reich's *Four Organs/Phase Patterns*, Philip Glass's *Solo Music* and Terry Riley's *Persian Surgery Dervishes*.

"The first piece of minimalist music I heard was Terry Riley's *Dawn Reed*," explains Caux, pulling out a copy of the LP in question, which was issued in America in 1966 by the tiny Mass Art Inc label. "There was this famous shop called Lido Music on the Champs Élysées which was the main specialist record store in Paris during the 60s and it was there where I collected most of the music I love, Terry Riley."

"I was a painter, and to me, other artists like Mondrian and Rothko were working in a similar way to the minimalist musicians. I thought of it as painting in sound. The repetition of the music was also appealing to me. It's more related to the fine arts than twelve tone music, it has more of a link."

By now Caux was working as a broadcaster for France Culture (the French equivalent of BBC Radio 3), and he persuaded the station to buy tapes for broadcast from La Monte Young, Tony Conrad and Angus MacLise. "The people at the radio station were somewhat conservative at first," Caux says, recalling the station's response to the extended durations of Young's drone works, "and although they liked it, they thought they would just play five minutes. In the end they played 30 minutes continuously."

Eventually Caux convinced Young to agree to record a *Theater Of Eternal Music* album for Shandar. After much discussion and fine tuning, the tapes were finally done in 1971. "La Monte is a very gay guy," laughs Caux, "but he's also a special case and working with him on a project can become complicated. When we were working on the *Theater Of Eternal Music* record he became very difficult and did not want to hand the tapes over; he would always find some reason. It's one of the longest of the Shandar albums."

As part of the deal Caux also agreed to release an album of ragas by the Indian classical singer Pandit Pran Nath, who at the time was guru to La Monte Young, Marian Zazezela and Terry Riley. "He [Young] was very much under the influence of Pandit Pran Nath," remembers Caux. "When Pandit had had enough he just got up and stood by the door, which meant that he wanted to leave. So La Monte just had to say goodbye to everyone and they would leave together. On one occasion Pandit stood up to leave and La Monte draped his coat over his shoulders. Pandit simply shrugged it off and let it fall to the floor, and La Monte had to pick it up and put it back. It was like that."

Young's devotion to his guru, however, was completely genuine, as he explained to Jacqueline and Daniel Caux in 1970: "Sometime after our first meeting he asked me to become his disciple. I accepted on the condition that I could continue my own work, which he didn't think was a problem. There was a ceremony and I became his disciple in the knowledge of the Indian tradition. Now he can admit me to certain secret traditions which cannot be revealed to ordinary students. These are the sort of things that are transmitted from guru to disciple in the oral tradition for centuries. My studies with Pandit Pran Nath have been very precious for me, they still are. They've been one of the greatest musical experiences of my life."

In any event, and as Caux points out, Young's relationship with Pran Nath mirrored the great singer's own experiences as a young disciple. "Pandit Pran Nath told me how he used to practise singing continuously," Caux continues. "He would often practise during the night for some nine hours while his guru Abdul Waheed Kahan slept. During the years when he served his guru he hardly slept, as disciples are not permitted to sleep while their guru is awake, only dozed. Having to work and serve his guru during the day, the only time he had to practise was when the main slept."

Another minimalist musician first championed by Caux was Charnéne Palestine, who he invited to perform at Michel Guy's Festival D'Autisme in 1974, a notable celebration of the arts that became the natural successor to the Nuits De La Fondation Maeght concerts. "I told France Culture to record Charnéne Palestine's Festival D'Autisme performance because it was important," explains Caux, a sentiment supported by Philippe Gras. "People who were working in the same direction like Philip Glass and Steve Reich would have been nothing without Festival D'Autisme," he asserts. "Steve Reich comes to France every year. He can make the piece he wants, and it started here through Shandar and Festival D'Autisme."

One of the projects that brought Palestine, Caux and Darcy closer together was the tape of piano music Palestine had brought to Paris, which he called *Strumming Music*. "We loved it," smiles Caux, "so we put it out on Shandar."

"Strumming Music came from a master [tape] that I recorded in my red and gold loft in Soho where I gave regular concerts for my friends and neighbours during the mid-70s," recalls Palestine. "That became the first time the outside world would hear the strumming phenomenon played as a concert piece."

Released in 1975, *Strumming Music* was the last great Shandar record. Caux was still involved, but other projects were now taking priority, and the running of the label was left to Chantal Darcy and Philip Lete. Under their leadership, Shandar released an idiosyncratic sequence of records, taking in electronic composition, Middle Eastern music and post-Gong psychedelia, by Dashiell Hedayat, Vincent Le Masne and Bertrand Porquet and Ragnar Grippe. There was also Abad Azrie's *Epit Of Gilgamesh*, a boxed two record set that, although attributed to Shandar, bore a label that read Le Roseau. None of the records sold, and Shandar slid into decline. One day in 1979 the cellar underneath the gallery in Rue Mazanne flooded, a catastrophe that destroyed most of the label's vinyl stock and several master tapes. The gallery folded soon after and Shandar was no more.

More than two decades on, Charnéne Palestine believes that market forces were ultimately responsible for the demise of the label. "Chantal and Philippe were lovely people," he states, "but they had no business sense, and the new business art scene was quickly changing the face of modern art. Some projects like Shandar disappeared in little perfumed clouds of smoke, and tough, ambitious business artists, dealers and collectors started to make their killing in the art and stock markets."

"Chantal was the main person who was holding the label together, but when she lost interest and Maeght died [in 1981], it fell apart," sighs Caux. "The new regime that took over the Maeght Foundation were more interested in dealing with fine arts. They didn't really care about Shandar." □ Thanks to Matt Robb and Ann Oliver for translations. Albert Ayler's Nuits De La Fondation Maeght 1970 has just been reissued on Water. For more information on Philippe Gras's photography, go to [www.eyecore.net](http://www.eyecore.net)



# The road to freedom

This interview with Albert Ayler was conducted by Daniel Caux on 28 July 1970 in Saint Paul de Vence in the south of France, the day after the second of Ayler's two Nuits de La Fondation Maeght concerts, and four months before his body was found in New York's East River. On the tape, Ayler's voice has a strange, compelling quality, as he discusses his childhood and early career in tones that float between innocence, bewilderment and excitement. This is the first time the interview has appeared in English.

Transcription and edit: Edwin Pouncey. Photos: Philippe Gras/Eye Control



**First of all could you tell us when and where you were born, and speak about your family, your parents?**

I was born in Cleveland, Ohio on 13 July 1936. My father played saxophone and violin, and he was also a singer. He wasn't known all over the world, just locally. Therefore, when I was born he wanted me to be world famous. My mother wasn't artistically inclined, she was just a mother. When I was three years old I used to listen to Lionel Hampton's music on the radio. I used to put my hand on the back of the radio to try and see where the music was coming from and I would get a shock. My mother would hit my hand saying, "No, don't do that". She didn't understand that I was an artist who had started young because of my father.

At the age of four I had a small footstool that I used to sit on. I used to pick it up and play along with Benny Goodman on the radio. My father would see me doing this and say, "He has talent and may be an artist, so I'll teach him to play music". When I was seven years old he started teaching me music. While the guys would be outside playing baseball, he would be beating me with a strap.

I was a little boy then, and I would cry. I wore short pants, see, and the tears would roll down my leg, he beat me like that. I thought this was very bad, but I guess he wanted to keep me away from playing so that I would stay in and learn music. He was rebelling, he wanted to be famous like I was going to be. He taught me for four years, and when I was eight years old I was called a child protégé. I won first prize in a competition where a number of talented kids were playing. When I was nine I was reading music and my father could teach me no more.

At the age of 11 I studied at Benny Miller's Academy. Benny Miller was a musician who had played with Charlie Parker and Miles Davis at the Tijuana Club in Cleveland. I studied there for seven years. About that time I started getting known and sitting in with other local musicians. I didn't know where the music would take me, so I started sitting in and began to see a different kind of life. When I was 16 I met [blues harp player] Little Walter and [later, rock 'n' roll singer and pianist] Lloyd Price. I started travelling with Little Walter when I was still in high school. At school I played golf and I was the golf captain. I was the first black man to ever win a trophy for the school. I could have played golf and been rich now, but music was in my heart. I had to do that.

The going was tough. We would play Saginaw, Michigan one night and then travel all night long to the next gig. They would be drinking and sleep driving. I said, "Is this music? Do I have to live like this?" I had to carry my food in a bag because there wasn't much money at that time. While I was travelling and playing with Little Walter he would say, "You don't hold the note long enough". So I started holding the note, and getting it good, and before I knew it I was fitting right in with them. I played with Little Walter the whole of that summer. It was a good experience for me.

When I was 19 I formed a little rhythm and blues band in Cleveland. I said, "Well maybe I can do something with this", but I ended up playing on street corners with whips, so I decided to better my situation and joined the army at 22. I joined the army to be around people that played music. At that time my music reading was slow, because in Cleveland we jam;

"I believe all music should have the roots of Louis Armstrong, it must have rhythmic truth"





we play as we feel and you don't read music. My commanding officer was a tough guy but he said, 'DK, Albert, we'll keep you in the band'. I was sent to train to be in the band and when I started, short, reading music became the easiest thing in the world.

In Drôme, France (where we were posted) we would play for six hours, and at the end of that I would practise hard at night. I would get just one sound and try all kinds of different things on the instrument to familiarise myself with it. I was hoping to be a great artist, but at that specific time in Drôme I was nothing. But being in France meant that I could go to Paris and play in a club which was much different, and the people all said, 'Beautiful'.

When I went to Sweden they said, 'This is what you feel and it's beautiful'. So I thought, Hmm, I may have something after all. Their telling me this made me think that I would go back to Sweden after I left the army and stay there awhile. When I got out of the army I went back to Cleveland and told my mother that I was going to live in Sweden. I told her that I had to go where somebody could understand what I was doing, because I didn't quite understand myself. The music hadn't formed in my head yet. I was playing it, but it was slow and not fast like it is today.

When I got to Sweden I first had to play commercial music like Kim Hunter and some other guys. They would play cello and whatnot, but I hated to play that. Every chance I would get I went to the old town in Sweden and play for the young people. After a while I met a guy called Bengt Nordstrom who said he wanted to make a record with me. I didn't know if I should make a record then, because I felt I wasn't musically developed enough. He said, 'It's necessary for you to make a record'. So I went to the studio and made the record. He said, 'Good, good. This is a good record'. I said, 'It's DK'.

After the record was made, Ole Vestergaard (Jensen) called and said he wanted to do a radio show with me in Denmark. When I played the radio show he said, 'We must make a record with "Bye, Bye, Blackbird", "Summer-time" and "CT" on it. It will be beautiful'.

I was playing [in a club in Sweden] with a piano player from Texas named Candy Green who sang like Ray Charles. They would give us two meals a day and we'd have to play there at noon and at night. When I played the radio date in Denmark and came back, I told him I had to go to America now, because I had played a little with Cecil Taylor while I was there. I decided to go back to America, and that's when I started playing with Cecil Taylor at the Take Three [in Greenwich Village]. Eric Dolphy and John Coltrane used to come and listen to Sunny Murray, Jimmy Lyons, Henry Grimes, Cecil and myself playing after they had finished at the Village Gate. They knew it was some new form of music that was happening. They didn't understand it, but they could feel it. We would play with Cecil and we would make five dollars. He would give it all to us for food and take nothing, so we would come back the next day and play with him again. He loved music more than a lot of his fellow musicians. In think.

This was in 1954 and at that time Ole Vestergaard called me and said that he had fixed up a job for me in Denmark, but he could only send me a one way

fare. I said, 'One way fare! How am I going to get back?' But then I thought, 'What the heck, let's go, so I got in touch with Sunny Murray and Gary Peacock. When I went over to see Gary Peacock he had been fasting for 33 days, no food, no anything. He was all shrivelled up. I said, 'Gary Peacock, why did you do this?' He just looked up at me, smiled and said, 'I must do this. I have dissipated a lot in my life and you play pure music'.

We made the trio record [Spiritual Unity] for Bernard Stollman's ESP before going to Europe. Then Don Cherry, Sunny Murray, Gary Peacock and myself got on a plane and we flew to Denmark. The people there didn't know if they liked the music or not, but the guy who owned the radio station was crazy about me. He would have me round at his house to play with his kids and just have a good time. He told the people, 'This free music will be valuable one day'.

After the tour Sunny Murray had to take a troop ship back to the States because he didn't save any of his money, he'd mailed it all back to his wife. Gary Peacock passed out in Amsterdam because he was only eating rice. He was laying there and we had to put a pan of water on his stomach. Peacock was the best bass player that I ever met, when we got together we would just play, we didn't have to talk about it. Peacock had to leave Amsterdam and go back to the States, but I was going back to Denmark, which is when Sunny Murray left on the troop ship. I returned to Cleveland feeling very frustrated, not understanding where everything was going, not understanding anything. All I knew was that I loved Charlie Parker. I used to listen to Coltrane in the army, this is all I knew. After that I didn't understand what was happening. I was living pure frustration like a mad man. I would be up in my room in Cleveland playing and beating on the floor. I would go downstairs and my mother would say to me, 'I don't think you are my child. When I was in hospital the man must have made a mistake and given me the wrong baby!' That made me cry and I thought, Hmm, nobody understands what I'm trying to do, and even I'm trying to understand it. It was a very shaky situation.

When I went back to New York [I sat in with] Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, Eric Dolphy, Sonny Rollins and all the other musicians who were there. Coltrane started playing and then Eric Dolphy joined in. When I started playing, somebody shouted out for me to leave the club. I couldn't understand it, but Eric said to me, 'You're the best I ever heard. Let nobody stop you from what you are doing'. After that I met [violinist] Michel Sampson and [bassist] Bill Fowell who were both under 25. That's when the new generation of jazz musicians were starting in America. From there I did a little travelling and came to play in Paris. I knew that the people here understood about the music more than they did in America. America was something else; there they were only after the money and whatnot.

When I returned to the States again I met [Mary] Mana [Parks, Ayler's wife and member of his final group] and she started writing music for me. One day Bob Thiele called me and said, 'Albert, Coltrane is dead'. I said, 'No, you're joking'. He said, 'His last request was for Ornette Coleman and you to play at

his funeral'. I thought, Hmm, how am I going to do that? I've gotta play crying. At the funeral Ornette Coleman played first and I played last. I played 'Truth is Marching in' and 'Love Cry'. Bob Thiele was in the audience and after the funeral he called me in to see him and sign a contract. When I signed the contract everything was a little better for me.

From then on the ball started moving and everything went smoothly. I met Mana and now she takes care of writing, talking to people and business. I sleep and take care of my music [laughs]. It's a blessing for me to meet her. She had the idea for the New Grass album. Bob Thiele wanted me to record *New Grass* with a pop group. They were the American equivalent of The Beatles, but I told him that I would like to stick with my own thing if I could. If I have to play pop music then let me get the musicians together. He said, 'On New Grass you have to sing'. I said, 'Me sing! I'm blowing my brains out'. So I played a club in the Village.... I can't remember the name of the club, but that's where I started singing. During the first couple of nights I started to get real hours. Playing was bad enough, but to sing total after that I figured, well America, I can play pop. I can play free, I can play anything, so I'll play a variety of music and maybe it will be OK. After I recorded *New Grass* I should have maybe gone back to Europe, but I thought I would give the American people another chance to understand what I'm trying to do, they deserve that. So I stayed in America and nothing happened with that record or the next, but I still had the contract and each year the money doubled, so I wasn't worried. Last year it was \$110,000 and it was beautiful. We paid off everything we owed and started to live the complete life of an artist. An artist's life is very hard so I must adjust myself now, because I know men who have died, like Charles Ives, the greatest composer in America, and while he was living nobody recognised him at all. He had to get a different job altogether. I still have my brother [Donald] to contend with. He's a very great artist in his own right. We try to talk to each other, but he doesn't hear me and I don't hear him. Like the music, we end up screaming at each other [laughs].

#### Could you tell us why, very often you change your musicians and orchestras?

I think you feel different things when you are developing as an artist. Like *Something Different!!!!!!*, the first record I made, you feel different things at different times. When it's time for a record to be made, I'll practise with a certain musician to see if I can use him for the date, to see if he can feel some of what I am feeling. If he's DK I'll use him. If not I'll move on to other musicians. I believe my music could never be made by being with one steady group all the time. You have to involve different people to make the music new music! [Laughs] I believe all music should have the roots of Louis Armstrong, it must have rhythmic truth, this is the most important thing. I know that many so-called avant garde musicians are just making sound, but you must still have the rhythm there. The rhythm must be there for you to really feel and appreciate that. That's all. □ The Copenhagen Times is out now on Ayler Records. The original version of this interview appeared in the French art magazine L'Art Vivant, issue 17 (February 1973.)

For more than 30 years, the whereabouts of Albert Ayler's former bassist Henry Grimes had remained a mystery. Then, last autumn, Marshall Marrotte tracked him down in a Los Angeles hotel room, where Grimes has been living since 1970, blissfully ignorant of Ayler's passing



# Surviving Albert Ayler

There have been many rumours about the fate of Henry Grimes, who played bass with Albert Ayler in New York in the mid-60s, appearing on such albums as *Spirits Rejoice*, *Witches And Devils* and *In Greenwich Village*. After 1967, he vanished from the record, his disappearance surrounded by colourful but unsubstantiated legends: that he had died in 1971 or 1984; that he had turned away from music and become a minister; that he was homeless; or that he had dyed his hair green and had begun playing electric bass in rock groups. Last year I started doing some research into Grimes's whereabouts. All I really knew was that he was more likely than not to be somewhere on the West Coast – whether he was alive or not was another matter. After a bit of detective work, I tracked down a Mr Henry Alonzo Grimes, born in 1935 in Philadelphia, and apparently still very much alive in the greater Los Angeles area. I made contact and flew out to meet him at his apartment – a single room in an old LA hotel.

For someone who has endured rough times, Grimes has managed to remain a gentleman with a great sense of humour. He is quiet and reserved, but happy and excited about the prospect of getting involved in music again. He also writes a great deal of poetry and hopes to publish some in the future.

I began by asking him about his recollections of friends and musicians such as Albert Ayler, Sonny Rollins, Don Cherry. His response was surprising...

How is Albert doing?

Well, I hate to be the one to tell you, but Albert passed away in 1970. There is still some debate as to what happened. Some say suicide, others say he was murdered. His body was found in the East River in New York City.

Oh, man, really? Wow, I did not know that. That's terrible. How are the other guys doing that played music back then?

Unfortunately, quite a few have passed away: Don Cherry, Ed Blackwell, Sonny Sherrock, Beaver Harris, Cal Cobb, Denis Charles, Billy Higgins, Jimmy Lyons, Charles Moffet, David Izenzon. Most folks thought that they were among them.

Wow, all those guys are gone, huh? That is really sad news. Are there any that are still playing?

Several still are: Pharoah Sanders, Cecil Taylor, Charlie Haden, Sonny Rollins, Perry Robinson, Allen Silva and a few others.

That's good to hear.  
What do you recall about Albert Ayler?

A fantastic improviser, amazing musician. He would come up with things completely out of nowhere, and from everywhere [laughs]. We played together a lot, just jamming, and Albert had all these sounds going on... The music had a spiritual element, but I didn't want to get too caught up in it and overplay, do too much, you know? Didn't want to over-contribute. Albert and I didn't hang out too much unless we were touring or in a studio or something, but I considered him a friend, a buddy.

What year did you drop out of the music scene? 1968-1970, I think.

Most biographies list you as disappearing in 1967.

Some have said that you passed away in 1971.

Oh yeah? [laughs]

Yes, there have been lots of rumours about your disappearance: for example, that you were supposed to do some gigs with Cecil Taylor in Europe, but you never showed up at the airport and vanished. Another was that you became a minister; another said you came out to California to be an actor.

[Laughs] Well, that last one is true: I did want to become an actor, I even took a workshop in acting. But it never worked out.

So you moved out to LA some time between 1967 and 1969?

No, first I moved to San Francisco for a year and played some music there. I worked with a group of younger guys called Lambert, Hendricks & Ross. They were scat-type singers and I played bass with them. It was very modern, experimental music. This was 68 or 69. It was more for economic reasons than anything else. I was involved in a lot of jam sessions, you know, but there was very little money.

There has been some talk about your struggles with your mental health during that period.

Yes, that's true, I did have some problems then. It had been going on for some time. I had to take medication to help with it. I had to go into the hospital for a while. They diagnosed me with manic depression and it was really hard on me. The medication helped me out though, for a while.

How are you feeling now?

I feel fine! The manic depression bothered me for a long time, but about 1978 I just started feeling better. I haven't had much of a problem since then.  
Talking of drugs, I was interested in the alleged LSD use among some of the musicians of that period.  
Yeah, there was a good amount of that going on. There were several musicians I knew who took acid. It was mostly just a social thing, you know? It opened you up to more things, you know, ideas and sounds, ways of playing.

After you moved from San Francisco to LA, were you still playing bass?

No, I had stopped by then, it was hard, economically speaking, to continue to play. I had sold my bass by that point. I think I had owned it since 58 or 59. I bought it in New York for about \$800, \$900. It was European and I got it from a repair guy, from what I can remember.

So you've been in LA since about 1970 until now?

Yes, that's right, I had decided to just drop out of the scene. It was a conscious decision I made.

What did you do to survive during that time?

Well, you know, I worked a lot of day labour jobs, construction type things. I was staying in a Mission on and off during that time.

You were homeless?

Yeah, I was, but I managed to get by. I worked a lot and tried to keep my hands in OK shape, you know, because if I messed them up then I couldn't work.

Then I worked as a janitor, did some telemarketing, construction, and even worked some security here for a very short time. I worked all kinds of jobs over the years.

Has anyone ever contacted you about royalties for any of the records you played on?

No, but they most likely would not have been able to get in touch with me anyway.

When was the last time you played bass? Do you have any interest in playing again?

It must have been in 1970, in a church with some

younger guys, I forgot their names, but it was a tho thing. This was in San Francisco, not long before I sold it. Yeah, I still have a desire to play – I think once I got started I could keep it going, as long as it was enjoyable, you know? Right now it's a matter of prodding myself into doing it. It would be difficult to have a bass here – too cumbersome, it might get broken in a place this small. But yeah, I would be interested in playing some gigs at some point, if anyone is interested in playing with me [laughs]. I just need to get an instrument.

After studying at Juillard in the mid-50s, you began working with Sonny Rollins around 1958-59?

Yeah, that seems about right – a while after I had moved to New York. I started working with [Charles] Mingus around that time as well. I think we played together in Baltimore at that time. He sometimes had two bass players in the band. He would play his compositions on the piano and then he would also play some bass.

How did you make the move from being involved in big bands, bop and hard bop, playing with folks like Benny Goodman, Mingus and Rollins, into avant garde music alongside Cecil Taylor and Albert Ayler?

Well, those musicians became interested in me and I played with whoever I could. I was lucky enough to get work with Benny Goodman, Sonny, Leroy Tiano, Gil Evans, Tony Scott and Gerry Mulligan. I played with Mulligan when I first moved to New York – I also played with Lee Konitz and then Leroy Tiano, Miles Davis, and Tommy Flanagan. I even played some gigs with Miles and Coltrane together. Later on I played with Cecil Taylor, Albert Ayler and other avant garde musicians, and I just stayed with them to see what they were about.

Tell me about playing with Cecil Taylor.

It was, uh, very unusual [laughs]. He played very much like a classical musician, he would get all over the piano, you know? I was working at Birdland and he came by and said he wanted me to work with him. It was a very enjoyable experience. I met Don Cherry when I was hanging around the Lower East Side. We did a lot of jam sessions and he asked me to work on a few things with him. I think we even worked together in Rome at some point.

You said that [drummer Ed] Blackwell passed away?

Yeah, Blackwell lived near me and we used to play together all the time. He had a lot of time for experimenting with musical forms, times and things. We did stuff that no one had been doing before, we did things just for the heck of it, I mean music we didn't even know we could do [laughs]. I tried to come from everywhere, using everything, Indian music, anything that inspired me.

Were you listening to a lot of Indian music at that time?

Yes, especially Ali Akbar Khan and some Ravi Shankar. Mainly Northern Indian music, though. It had a lot of influence on my playing. I haven't thought about that in a long time. It's really amazing how much stuff I have forgotten about.

You know, a lot of the impulsive records you played on are being released on CD – the Roy Hemes record, the Ayler records [I put some of these CDs from my bag and show them to Grimes, who looks puzzled].

So this is a CD? Oh wow, you can see how out of touch I am. [Laughs] You know, I'm not really one of those button-pusher kind of guys... □

**Rewind 2002**

# **Sonic Youth**

MURRAY STREET (Geffen)

# **Derek Bailey**

BALLADS (Tzadik)

# **Boards Of Canada**

GEOGADDI (Warp)

# **Asa-Chang & Junray**

JUN RAY SONG CHANG (Leaf)

# **Various**

IMPROVISED MUSIC FROM JAPAN (IMPROVISED MUSIC FROM JAPAN)

# **Jim O'Rourke**

INSIGNIFICANCE (Domino)

# **Godspeed You! Black Emperor**

YANQUI UXO (Constellation)

# **Cecil Taylor Feel Trio**

2 TS FOR A LOVELY T (CodaZa)

# **DJ / Rupture**

MINESWEEPER SUITE (Tigerbeat6)

# **Philip Jeck**

STOKE (Touch)

IN OUR 12 PAGE REVIEW OF 2002, WE PRESENT THE TOP 50 RECORDS OF THE YEAR, AND THE WINNING RELEASES IN EACH GENRE AS VOTED FOR BY OUR TEAM OF WRITERS AND CRITICS, WHO ALSO OFFER THEIR PERSONAL PROS & CONS OF 2002. PLUS, A SELECTION OF THIS YEAR'S HIGH-RANKING MUSICIANS DELIVER THEIR VERDICTS ON THE PAST 12 MONTHS

## 50 Records of the Year

**SONIC YOUTH** MURRAY STREET (Geffen)  
**DEREK BAILEY** BALLADS (TZADIK)  
**BOARDS OF CANADA** GEOGADDI (WARP)  
**ASA-CHANG & JUNRAY**  
 JUN RAY SONG CHANG (LEAF)  
**VARIOUS** IMPROVISED MUSIC FROM JAPAN  
 (IMPROVISED MUSIC FROM JAPAN)  
**JIM O'Rourke** INSIGNIFICANCE (DOMINO)  
**GODSPEED YOU! BLACK EMPEROR**  
 YANQIU UXO (CONSTELLATION)  
**CECIL TAYLOR** FEEL TRIO  
 2 TS FOR A LOVELY T (CODANZA)  
**DJ /RUPTURE** MINESWEEPER SUITE  
 (TIGERBEATS)  
**PHILIP JECK** STOKES (TOUCH)  
**BARBARA ESS & PEGGY AHWESH**  
 RADIO GUITAR (ECSTATIC PEACE)  
**ELIANE RADIQUE** ADNOS I-III  
 (TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS)  
**EL-P** FANTASTIC DAMAGE (DEF JUX)  
**SUICIDE** AMERICAN SUPREME (BLAST FIRST)  
**VAIRA** MANDALA CAT LATE (PSP)  
**ANTIPOD** CONSCIOUS ARMYTHYMA (WARP)  
**RADIAN** REC EXTREME THRILL JOCKEY  
 (LOW TRUST) (ROUGH TRADE)  
**HENRI CHOPIN/VARIOUS**  
 REVUE OU (ALGA MARGHEN)  
**RAOUL BJÖRKENHEIM/INGEBRIGT HÅKER**  
 FLATEN/PAAL NILSEN-LOVE  
 THE SCORCH TRIO (IRUNE GRAMMOFON)  
**LOL COXHILL** SPECTRAL SOPRANO (EMANEM)  
**RECLOOSE** CARDIOLOGY (PLANET E)  
**AKUFEN** MY WAY (FORCE INC)  
**DAVID S WARE** FREEDOM SUITE  
 (AUM FIDELITY)  
**SUPER** COLLIDER RAW DIGITS  
 (ISE ROBOTS RISE)  
**TOM WAITS** ALICE (ANTI)  
**THE LIARS** THEY THREW US ALL IN A TRENCH  
 AND STUCK A MONUMENT ON TOP  
 (BLAST FIRST)  
**MURCOF** MURKES (LEAF)  
**SIGUR RÓS** I (IAT CAT)  
**MISSY ELLIOTT** UNDER CONSTRUCTION  
 (ELEKTRA)  
**SOUL CENTER** III (NOVAMUTE)  
**POLWHEELS & FENNEZ** WRAPPED ISLANDS  
 (ERSTWHILE)  
**CINEMATIC ORCHESTRA** EVERYDAY  
 (NINJA TUNE)  
**VARIOUS** THE FIRE THIS TIME (HIDDEN ART)  
**EKKEHARD EHLERS** PLAYS (STAUBGOLD)  
**HEINER GOEBBELS** EISLERMATERIAL (ECM)  
**TERRY RILEY** ATLANTIS NATH  
 (SRI MOONSHINE MUSIC)  
**BLEVIN** BLECTUM TALON SALOM (DELUXE)  
**TIM NUT TRIO** THE RODEO ERODED  
 (ROPE A DOPE)  
**BURNT FRIEDMAN & JAKI LIEBEZEIT**  
 SECRET RHYTHMS (INONPULSE)  
**JACKIE-O** MOTHERFUCKER CHANGE (TEXTILE)  
**VINCENT GALLO** RECORDING OF MUSIC FOR  
 FILMS (WARP)  
**MR LIP** I PHANTOM (DEF JUX)  
**FARREN** TEXTAR (KLANG ELEKTRONIK)  
**PATTI SMITH** LANE 1975-2002 (ARISTA)  
**THE NOTWIST** NEON GOLDEN (CITY SLANG)  
**ROCKET** FROM THE TOMBS THE DAY THE  
 EARTH MET... (GLITTERHOUSE)  
**OTOMO YOSHINIDE** ENSEMBLE CATHODE  
 (IMPROVISED MUSIC FROM JAPAN)  
**CHEB-I-SABHAN** KRISHNA LILA (SIX DEGREES)  
**KID606** THE ACTION PACKED MENTALIST  
 BRINGS YOU FUCKING JAMS (MENTAL TURD)

### SONIC YOUTH MURRAY STREET (Geffen)

Naming their 10th LP after their Manhattan studio, which was hit by an engine from one of the hijacked planes on 11 September, Sonic Youth cooped Boris Yermakov and sculpted another collection of guitar-madness meltdowns and skulled out psychedelia. We said: "From out of the dust, debris and rubble Sonic Youth have risen, offering up their brave new sound of tomorrow." (June/200)

### BOARDS OF CANADA GEOGADDI (WARP)

Holed up at their Hexagon Sun studios in deepest Scotland, Marcus Eoin and Michael Sandison produced a collection of synthetic ruminations and wasteful oneness that took psychedelic electronics to a broad audience. We said: "In a world where child abuse is the perpetual fallout from the nuclear family, BOC's childhood reverie finally, emotively strikes the right note of disquiet." (April/218)

### VARIOUS IMPROVISED MUSIC FROM JAPAN (IMPROVISED MUSIC FROM JAPAN)

This comprehensive ten CD survey of Japanese experimental music, covering turntablism, drone-rock, electronically mediated sounds, soundscapes and rituals, came handsomely modulated in a wooden box. We said: "MPJ is breathing life into some, ranging from the Tsuguru shamisen improvisations of Michino Sato to the 50-Mac pickup of Yasuhiro Ochi." (February/218)

### GODSPEED YOU! BLACK EMPEROR YANQIU UXO (CONSTELLATION)

Steve Albini took over production for the Montreal massive's third blast of drone-rock disaffection, whose sleeve art linked the corporate record industry with the global arms trade. We said: "GVIIE fervently perform this music as an act of devotion, which looks and plays in adoration to the heavens while keeping its eye fixed on terra firma." (November/220)

### DJ /RUPTURE MINESWEEPER SUITE (TIGERBEATS)

Madrid based American Jace Clayton took the turntable mix to serve the music rather than show off his mad skills, blasting a trail that ranged from DAT Politics to Sade. We said: "Overcrosses the planet to uncover secret links and echoes, utilities of melodic systems and artistic purposes, without resorting to glib assimilation." (July/222)

### DEREK BAILEY BALLADS (TZADIK)

Reinventing himself as a Joe Pass for the improv circuit, the veteran no-nonsense guitarist responded positively to John Zorn's invitation to perform this collection of ballad-oriental overgreens. We said: "He stamps his mark unforgettably onto each of the 14 ballads, an extraordinary fusion of jazz and free playing... As ever, his improvising dislodges indifference, and that's invaluable." (May/219)

### ASA-CHANG & JUNRAY JUN RAY SONG CHANG (LEAF)

A former member of a ska orchestra, Tokyo's Asa-Chang took the sound of the tabla into a twisted and twisted hard disk space. Armed purring bursts of robotic voices, he cultivated a dense forest of clipped beats. We said: "Asa-Chang manages to pull off a feeling of extreme dislocation, albeit of a kind that, with practice, you can still whistle and clap along to." (July/221)

### JIM O'Rourke INSIGNIFICANCE (DOMINO/DRAW CITY)

One of O'Rourke's many recordings this year, which included an electronic CD on Meglo, the polymorphous imp of the perverse hitched off-kilter lyrics to four square rock songs inspired by Neil Young and Van Dyke Parks. We said: "Is it not true that a voice which does slightly too little, as opposed to too much (think Popstars), is far more interesting at this point in history?" (December 31/214)

### CECIL TAYLOR FEEL TRIO 2 TS FOR A LOVELY T (CODANZA)

Richard Cook put together this monumental set (10 CDs housed in a stark black box) documenting ten performances over one week in 1990 by the pianist's trio featuring drummer Tony Oxley and bassist William Parker. We said: "A release this size can appear daunting... Whether you sample it or invest it full day, what it gives back is immense." (August/222)

### PHILIP JECK STOKES (TOUCH)

Ghostly bricolage, looped drones, surface noise and gossamer rhythms of pulsating hiss: the Liverpool based turntablist crowned a ten year career with his best album yet of haunted impressionism coaxed from vinyl outcits. We said: "Philip Jock has always been good, but Stokes makes him great." (June/220)

## Avant Rock

### Sonic Youth

MURRAY STREET (GEPFEN)

### Suicide

AMERICAN SUPREME (BLAST FIRST)

### Vajra

MANDALA CAT LAST (PSP)

### Sigur Rós

( ) (FAT CAT)

### Captain Beefheart & The Magic Band

DUST SUCKER (MILKSAFE)

### Out Hud

S.T.R.E.E.T.D.A.D (KRANKY)

### Acid Mothers Temple & The Melting Paralofo UFO

ELECTRIC HEAVYLAND (ALIEN#)

### The Liars

THEY THREW US ALL IN A TRENCH AND STUCK A MONUMENT

ON TOP (BLAST FIRST)

### Jim O'Rourke

INSIGNIFICANCE (DOMINO)

### Le Tigre

REMIX (KILL ROCK STARS)

### The Sunatanama

THE SUNATANAMA (DRAG CITY)

### Wire

READ AND BURN ( ) (PINK FLAG)

### Jackie-O Motherfucker

CHANGE (TEXTILE)

### Barbara Ess & Peggy Ahwesh

RADIO GUITAR (ECSTATIC PEACE)

### Vibracathedral Orchestra

DABBLING WITH GRAVITY AND WHO YOU ARE (VHF)

## Electronica

### Soul Center

III (NOVAMUTE)

### Boards Of Canada

GEOGADDI (WARP)

### Hrvatski

SWARM AND DITHER (PLANET MU)

### Sdon

ARRANGE AND PROCESS BASIC CHANNEL TRACKS (TRESOR)

### Murcof

MARTES (LEAF)

### Ekkehard Ehlers

PLAYS (STAUBGOLD)

### Fennesz

FIELD RECORDINGS 1995-2002 (TOUCH)

### Susumu Yokota

THE BOY AND THE TREE (LEAF)

### Pita

GET DOWN (MEGO)

### Matmos

LIVE WITH J LESSER (VAGUE TERRAIN)

### AGF

HEAD SLASH BAUCH (ORTHLOING MUSORK)

### Random Inc

WALKING IN JERUSALEM (MILLE PLATEAUX)

### Super Collider

RAW DIGITS (RISE ROBOTS RISE)

### Akufen

MY WAY (FORCE INC)

### Kim Horthoy

MELKE (SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND)

## Dub & Roots

### Yabby You

DUB IT TO THE TOP 1979-79 (BLOOD AND FIRE)

### The Skatalites/King Tubby

THE LEGENDARY SKATALITES IN DUB (MOTION)

### The Bug vs The Rootsman featuring Mexican

WWW (RAZOR X)

### Atom™/Small Rocks/The Rip Off Artist

DUB TRIBUNE (INFLATABL)

### Dry & Heavy

DUB CREATION (BEAT)

### Cedric 'Im Brooks

LAMB'S BREAD (COLLIE/VERSION (HONEST JON'S)

### Restless Mashalls

KINGSTON SESSIONS 1992-2002 (ADDIS)

### Stranger Cole/Leroy Heptone

REVOLUTION/THE TIME IS NOW (WACKIES)

### Love Grocer

FRESH PRODUCE (DUBHEAD)

### V-Neck

MILLENNIUM (LAW & AUDER)

## Global

### Orchestra Baobab

SPECIALIST IN ALL STYLES (WORLD CIRCUIT)

### Cheb-i-Sabbah

KRISHNA LILA (SIX DEGREES)

### Badawi

SOLDIER OF MIDIAN (ROIR)

### Alèmu Aga

ETHIOPIQUES 11: THE HARP OF KING DAVID (BUDA MUSIQUE)

### Various

GHANA SOUNDZ (SOUNDWAY)

### Various

ETHIOPIQUES 16: TEZETA: ETHIOPIAN BLUES AND BALLADS

(BUDA MUSIQUE)

### Various

AFGHANISTAN: THE TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF HERAT (AUVIDIS)

### Orchestra Super Mazembe

GIANTS OF EAST AFRICA (STERNS/EARTHWORKS)

### The Gyuto Monks

THE PERFECT JEWEL: SACRED CHANTS OF TIBET (RYKODISC)

### Cyro Baptista

BEAT THE DONKEY (TZADIK)

# SUICIDE AMERICAN SUPREME (BLAST FIRST)



Alan Vega and Martin Rev came out fighting with their first record for years: a self-produced journey into the American psyche post-9/11, and with a lesson or two for the electro revivalists. Say: "A brave, bleak yet compassionate record." (November/225)

# YABBY YOU DUB IT TO THE TOP 1976-79 (BLOOD AND FIRE)



Blood And Fire's follow-up to the peerless *Jesus On My Mind* compilation foregrounded Yvian Jackson aka Yabby You the producer, whose spirituality infused the King Tubey/Prince Jimmy Minkay Yabby You Meets Michael Prophet, here expanded with *Besides* and 12" out. We said: "This is about as good as it got in the 70s before the horn sections became expatriate with the advent of the heavier Riddim dancehall style." (May/219)

# SOUL CENTER III (NOVAMUTE)



Merging German Techno with the notion of the Black Atlantic, Thomas Brinkmann's first Mute release loomed grinding, visceral funk breaks – "thumpthump meets obliqueboom upturn" – and soul rollers, repositioning lyrical outbursts in a way which "carries the shades of outsiders and the silence forced on them." (March/217)

# ORCHESTRA BAOBAB SPECIALIST IN ALL STYLES (WORLD CIRCUIT)



Senegal's most popular group of the 1970s were persuaded to reform by World Circuit's Neck Gold, who jetted in producer Youssou N'Dour and Cuban star Ibrahim Ferrer to guest on an infectious Afro-Cuban mix recalling its 1982 predecessor. Say: "One of the joys of this record as lead guitarist Cissoko's ability to meet the needs of any occasion... This is dignified hipswinging, essentially." (November/225)

# THURSTON MOORE

1) Walking into Spring Street Gallery in downtown NYC to see the photo show of umadee post-secular/contel lesbian beats by artist Tammy Rae Carland. Tammy Rae is also a proprietor of Mr Lady Records, which releases the incredible energy music of Lu Tigre. Kathleen Hanna is curator of Spring Street Gallery. This only the second show she's presented, the first being a lesbian calendar exhibit by Le Tigre's Jo Sanson and photographer Cass Bird. So it's at a family affair, but what a household. Tammy Rae's art is striking – at once calm and cool yet alluding to a state of arousal either spent or anticipated.

2) Watching Erase Errata in a small tavern on the Hampshire College campus in Amherst, Massachusetts. These four Guelphed, California wildchildren catalyzed the room in 30 seconds flat w/ the most barking rhythm section and slice and stun guitar work not heard since Pat Place squared w/ George Scott III in the 1978-era Contortions. Jerry, the lead singer, scrambles any concept of frontperson dynamics w/ a stuporous fusion of Grace Slick, Karl Schwitters, Samelle Ayler and Dee Giddens.

3) Watching Aneka Rata storm the stage at the 9:30 Club in Washington DC after Erase Errata anti-climactically split. Sporting fake-fur bear hats and four-blasted underthings, the group, seemingly consisting of all four Erase Errata members, Kim Gordon and avant garde cheerleading dancers courtesy of Mary Timony and band, proceeded to ravage the question-marked audience w/ "throat" n' scatter hardware punk. All songs composed just three hours prior. Hot.

4) Trying to figure out how to scoot into NYC to see Merzbow and Torturemagus at Tonic as it's the same night as my mom's surprise 75th birthday party. When will clubs do live versions of these gigs for us homebodies?

5) Experiencing what amounted to a full-on Strokes event: Ron Asheton and J Mascis on guitars, Mike Watt on bass and Scott Asheton on drums at All Tomorrow's Parties in LA. Utterly shredding w/ Ron laying down the blueprint of punk rock chording and his own engine of wall-wah genius. Interspersing w/ J's fluid falts. Scott behind his kit, backwards truck-driver cap and mirrored shades driving the machine like a goddamned Harley. Watt jowled the vox w/ a guest appearance by Kim Gordon on "I Wanna Be Yr Org" that completely incinerated the academic fold-out shelter.

6) Witness mainstream activities that floated my kelly: Billy Osborne's voice, which is pure-born rock 'n' roll. Vanessa Carlton's elegant self-effacement versus her delirious techno CO. Pop group by bands like Aqua and Murrill and Spice girls on the Sabina. The teenage Witch soundtrack CD and Frank Black and others on the Powerpuff Girls CD. Pink throwing down earth-bound vox in duo w/ Steve Tyrer on national television. Whatever public issues Mariah Carey seems to be dealing with.

7) The Berlin duo of Cobra Hilar live in Köln, Germany! On his God! The most fantastic nightingale-swing-antic trash-Techno burlesque gang. Amazing and fucked up top-toe-loop hooks w/ silets concerning reprimands from "the Queen" and a farewell to the audience which involves beautiful hugging. A solve for the madness of reality.

8) Adis Hoyo who was the drummer in Florida's Harry Pussy. In the late 90s Harry Pussy live were the most exciting and eye-popping noise group in the USA. Their tour w/ the UK's Shadow Ring is stuff of legend. It was on this tour that Adis met and later betrothed Shadow Ring member Graham Lambkin.

The two have been working and schooling here in the USA on an undisclosed residence, but it seems that Adis is gunning to perform once again. Adis's style of amplified energy music is amazingly unique in its musicality and spellbindingly beautiful in its approach. Adis Hoyo in duo with Derek Bailey is my dream concert.

9) Yeah Yeah Yeahs live at the Calvin Theater in Northampton, Massachusetts. The only rock garage aesthetic heard from the Yeah Yeah Yeahs would probably be the fact that there is no bass guitar – a somewhat historical, yet contemporary, identity for USA garage acts (the legendary Gonies as prime model). But YYY's have a wholly other factor at work: avant jazz and experimental rock, dance and lyrical concerns. Which is all at bit disarming as it exhibits formalism (particularly when solo) while spawning garage rock energy. A juicy punk/academic hybrid I hadn't really witnessed since Miriam Makeba or Cramps.

10) Four live bands from the USA who torched my ass this past year: Liars from parts everywhere who completely pummel head/punk/tank rhythm lines w/ wonderful noise guitar exuberations and a singer taller than me (interest) who can shake it for the world to see. Impressive. Wolf Eyes from

Detroit, Michigan who perform w/ junk machine instrumentation in a manner not seen since the MC5's Grande Ballroom events. Lightning Bolt from Providence, Rhode Island – a duo of bass and drums set up anywhere except the stage from floor to ceiling and peering off magnificent volume slowworks which have remarkable qualities of harmonic virtuosity. And Black Dice from Brooklyn, New York who have evolved into one of the best bands in town with hour-long forays into high-shudder composition. Not to be missed.

# LEE RANALDO

After the heavy time that we have in NYC went through in the last few months of 01, it is a bit of a revelation to look back at this last year and find so much great music, both live and on record.

Prose: Slater-Kimney's *One Beat* and Pavement's *Slanted And Enchanted* – *Luxe And Reduxe* (if whatever) were two of the recorded highlights for me – my five groups of the late and early 90s, respectively. S-H-K continue to be astounding live as well. 'New' NYC scene – Liars and Yeah Yeah Yeahs – both live and on disc: *Black Dice Beaches* & *Canyons* CD; *Lightning Bolt* live after *SVT* in Providence two weeks ago: one of the most amazing 'performances' I've seen, dangerous and vital. Bright Eyes *Live...* struck me this morning as evocative of *Singer* *Loveless* Big Star, which I hadn't thought of before, in any case one to watch. Dylan's *Rolling Thunder 200 set*.

Snog live and on record. France Gall's *Peuple De Son* has been in the player a lot this year: it sets our boys dancing madly around the house. Steve Reich's music for *Three Tales* at BAM. Tasha Dorn's *Fernsehstern* film shot in East Berlin's space-wards revolving restaurant. Paul Smith remembering Gregory Corso in St Mark's Church. Lou Reed's adaptation of *The Witches* these come months later.

Some personal live moments this year: Sonic Youth's *Murray Street* tours of Europe and USA: it's great to feel, our 21st years, that we're still playing music that rank among our best ever (if I do say so myself). ATP in LA, which we captured in March – four great nights of music by so many of our favourite people, what a stellar weekend. Museum performances in Porto and Lisbon, Portugal: duets with Rafael Tzuc, accompanied by live images on film by my wife Leah Singer and video by Paulo Feliciano; playing with Haino Keiji at Tonic in November, and with Glines Golden Twins at EMP in Seattle earlier in the year. Test Of Light gig in Philadelphia with Ann Uchi/Christian Marquis/OJ Olive and the Shlums Hooker, to Stan Brakhage's film of the same name. Cholesterol Memorial ("All Bulshit/No Reason To Cry") at Society Poetry Club in May.

The Cons are always the same, aren't they? Warmongering, hatred, enervation, bad music on the radio... let's hope for less of all that in the year ahead.

## Hip-Hop

### El-P

FANTASTIC DANCE (DEF JUX)

### RJD2

DEADRINGER (DEF JUX)

### Antipop Consortium

ARRHYTHMIA (WARP)

### DJ / Rupture

MINESWEEPER SUITE (TIGERBEATS)

### Boom Bip

SEED TO SUN (LEX)

### DJ Vadim

USSR: THE ART OF LISTENING (NINJA TUNE)

### Missy Elliott

UNDER CONSTRUCTION (ELEKTRA)

### Buck 65

SQUARE (WARNERS)

### Themselves

THE NO MUSIC (ANTICON)

### Killer Mike

AKSHOW (ARISTA)

### Mr Lif

I PHANTOM (DEF JUX)

### Boom Bip & Rose One

CIRCLE (LEAF)

### Sage Francis

PERSONAL JOURNALS (ANTICON)

### Blackalicious

BLAZING ARROW (MCA)

### DJ Shadow

THE PRIVATE PRESS (ISLAND)

## Improv

### Derek Bailey

BALLADS (TZADIK)

### Mimeo & John Tilbury

THE HANDS OF CARAVAGGIO (ERSTWILE)

### Derek Bailey

PIECES FOR GU(TAR) (TZADIK)

### Roger Smith

GREENWOOD (EMANEH)

Nicols/Kraabel/Hug

TRANSITIONS (EMANEH)

Evan Parker & Han Bennink

THE GRASS IS GREENER (PSI)

Polwechsel/Fennosz

WRAPPED ISLANDS (ERSTWILE)

Derek Bailey & Min Xiao-Fen

FLYING DRAGONS (INCUS)

Derek Bailey & Simon H Fell

15 AUGUST 2001 (SOUND 523)

Lol Coxhill

SPECTRAL SOPRANO (EMANEH)

Mike Adcock & Clive Bell

SLEEP IT OFF (EMANEH)

Chris Cutler

SOLO (RER MEGACORP)

Efzeg

BOOGIE (GROB)

Masayoshi Urabe & Chie Mukai

DUAL ANARCHISM (SIWA)

Sonic Youth/ICP/The Ex

IN THE FISHTANK (KONKURRENT)

## Jazz

### Cecil Taylor Feel Trio

2 TS FOR A LOVELY T (CODANZA)

### David S Ware

FREEDOM SUITE (AUM FIDELITY)

### The Arthur Doyle Electro-Acoustic Ensemble

PLAYS THE AFRICAN LOVE CALL (ECSTATIC YODI)

### Tomasz Stanko

SOUL OF THINGS (ECM)

William Parker Quartet featuring Leena Conquest

RAINING ON THE MOON (THIRSTY EAR)

Peter Brötzmann/Die Like A Dog Quartet

AOYAMA CROWS (FMP)

### Craig Taborn

LIGHT MADE LIGHTER (THIRSTY EAR)

Otomo Yoshihide's New Jazz Quintet

DREAMS (TZADIK)

Brötzmann/Parker/Wertmuller

NOTUNG (IN TONE)

### Fieldwork

YOUR LIFE FLASHES (PI)

### Andrew Hill

A BEAUTIFUL DAY (PALMETTO)

### Close Erase

DANCE THIS (BP)

### Susie Ibarra Trio

SONGBIRD SUITE (TZADIK)

### Bill Wells Trio

ALMOST IN WHITE (GEOGRAPHIC)

Raoul Björkenheim/Ingebrigt Håker Flaten/

Paal Nilssen-Love

SCORCH TRIO (RUNE GRAMMOFON)

## Modern Composition

### Eliane Radigue

ADNOS I-III (TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS)

### Gordon Mumma

LIVE ELECTRONIC MUSIC (TZADIK)

### Charlemagne Palestine

MUSIC FOR BIG EARS (STAALPLAAT)

### Arnold Dreyblatt & The Orchestra Of Excited Strings

THE ADDING MACHINE (CANTALOUPE)

Richard Teitelbaum

BLENDS (NEW ALBION)

Simon H Fell

THIRTEEN RECTANGLES (BRUCE'S FINGERS)

### Terry Riley

ATLANTIS NATH (SRI MOONSHINE MUSIC)

### Gloria Coates

STRING QUARTETS (NAKOS)

Helmut Lachenmann

SCHWANKUNGEN AM RAND (ECM)

Morton Feldman

INDETERMINATE MUSIC (MODE)

### Frank Denyer

FIRE CITY (TZADIK)

Heiner Goebbels

EISLERMATERIAL (ECM)

Frederic Rzewski

RZEWSKI PLAYS RZEWSKI (NONESUCH)

Iannis Xenakis

PERSEPOLIS + REMIXES (ASPMODEL)

Helmut Lachenmann

DAS MÄDCHEN MIT DEN SCHWEFELHÖLZERN (KAIROS)



**EL-P**  
FANTASTIC DAMAGE  
(DEFINITIVE JUX)



Crunching drum machines, headbanging rhythms and maelstrom crammed this hip-hop juggernaut from the self-styled "best motherfucker since Cedric". We said: "In a syncretistic environment, this album would have the odour of the locker room – you could imagine Henry Rollins, Norman Macleer, Robert Anton Wilson and Philip K. Dick doing bench presses to *Fantastic Damage*." (May/21/9)

**MIMED & JOHN TILBURY**  
THE HANDS OF CARAVAGGIO  
(ERSTWHILE)



Augmented by Keith Rowe's AMBA corkscrew John Tilbury, the 11-strong MIMED staged a head to head between trad improv and Powerbook electronics, from which the listener emerged as winner. We said: "That this performance not only manages to resolve all its technical, artistic and linguistic issues but also creates in the process a landmark work of great significance, beauty and integrity is nothing short of a miracle." (May/21/9)

**DAVID S WARE**  
FREEDOM SUITE  
(AUM FIDELITY)



The freebowed NYC saxophonist's diamond sharp tribute to Sonny Rollins's masterpieces, with William Parker, Guillermo Brown and Matthew Shipp, was an emotional piedveer. We said: "His trademark eulazany prevails, but without turning the materials into scorched earth. He stays true to Rollins and himself..." (October/22/4)

**ELIANE RADIGUE**  
ADNOS-III  
(TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS)



Realised between 1973 and 1980, the French analogue synth veteran's Adnos trilogy slowed the pulse and alarmed the broken on time over three CDs contemplating "the universal from which everything comes". We said: "Radigue's inspired minimalism is grounded in the old-fashioned synthesizer that is her sound source. She uses its intrinsic graininess, its sweep and rise to envelop the aesthetic within the aesthetic and draw the trace towards the ecstatic." (September/22/3)

**KIM GORDON**

Thurston has already taken some of my best choices, which is both funny and annoying.

- 1) Watching Tony Conrad at ATP last spring, it was mesmerizing.
- 2) Seeing Arthur Doyle's Electro-Acoustic Ensemble play at the Rumpelshutz Tavern. He's my men music inspiration: it was him and this young girl playing guitar who was very cool and animal in her playing, the drummer had a huge, weird looking drum set. He took off his shirt immediately, he looked sort of triquetral-wild. There was another twenty-something guy with a growbox and a turntable doing some sort of electronic shit, I don't know, but it was a purple cloud of free thought, and spirit music. I love Arthur's vocals. He's the best I'd know of.
- 3) Emoco... why? Has anyone written a paper or done research on this as the displacement of the male presence in a culture engendered by the idea of women as giant breasts?
- 4) The Tom Skerrit... good coming of age story.
- 5) Nantronics: seeing Jim O'Rourke and Thurston playing prepped guitar and synth wearing nuns' habits at the Flywheel.
- 6) Listening to Iternage Jesus on an old matripe. Still sounds so fucking modern.
- 7) Erase Errat: somewhere, anywhere.
- 8) Menah Carey doing her version of Erno.
- 9) Meeting Piers Wilson and noticing that she had three types of face gloss on, just like a fashion photo.
- 10) Lightning Bolt in Providence, Rhode Island... Erno without words, now that's music to my heart.

**DEREK BAILEY**

Some high points of 2002 for me were: The four-day Company event at Tonic in NYC, 17 players took part: John Zorn, Jim O'Rourke, Miguel Frascón, Fred Sherry, Ikuo Mori, Dikky Lee, DJ Dave, Chris Taylor, Casey Rice, Alan Licht, Tim Barnes, Chris Khatavatzil, Julian Kytasty, Andy Gurf, Norbert Mousing, and two gentlemen from the Krewe Alkome Orchestra. Other high points: production, with Kaaren Broome, of the Inoue CD-R series: five so far, all totally in house. Also 'in house' visitors who turned up to play, including JD Piarra, Duck Baker, Don Marshall, Peter Jackson, Scott Pleasure, THF Drenching, Alex Ward, Tony Bevan, Chris Fischer, Freda Sperdasi, Steve Howe, Angharad Owens, Rhodri Davies, Alfredo Montero and Parris Fagot. Plus acquisition of an acoustic guitar I'd been looking for for over 50 years. And Saturday nights in Dolden. Cons? Sunday mornings.

**FREDERIC RZEWSKI**

A new kind of tribal music flourishes in every large city I know: written/improvised, experimental/traditional, electronic/acoustic, made mostly by younger people in unofficial venues, spontaneously organised, with a sense of urgency, responding to a need for collectively perceived cultural identity, self-regied, free of commercial and academic clichés. For me this has been the best development in 2002. The official 'New Music' scene, with its habitual posture of apolitical neutrality, becomes more and more anachronistic, endlessly repeating yesterday's ritual gestures. I think the alternative music movement will grow in 2003, and will become more political; in gloomy times music prospers.

**ASA-CHANG**

Top 10:  
UK / DORRBO  
Matthew Herbert (live)  
Emerson Klamoud (live), who also recently revisited Herbert.  
Fiji Rock Festival  
Can't think of any more...  
Ase-Chang & Junjia's "Preach" was used by a Welsh dance company called Divisions, who actually came to Japan so it was able to see the performance... this really moved me. The photographer, Shigeo Ito, has very original ideas and Divisions were very impressive. It was very funny, but a bit of a pity that the dancers from Divisions didn't know the music was written by me when I met them. I tried to use my bad English to inform them, "It's also released in UK", I wonder if they understood...

**CHARLEMAGNE PALESTINE**

I don't really know what to say about 2002. It was the 100th anniversary of the teddy bear. I didn't do so much travelling this year. Working on the book that will finally come out early 2003 about my work. I finally bought a computer music system and am trying to figure out how it works. I rediscovered Mesopotamian (some fantastic recordings directed by Myung-whun Chung especially Eclairs Sur L'Alde) (Mesopotamians Of The Beyond) his last piece written a couple of years before his death and it really does enter the beyond it shocked me. I cried like a baby. Biosensory finally was sold by the Americans back to the States. I was able to free 30 of my important sculptures that had been impounded during the bureaucracy of my former gallery in Geneva during the early 90s and now they are happy animals free and living in Belgium. It's been a dramatic eight years since I was rediscovered. I even got to see my old friend Tony Conrad a month ago here in Brussels it had been almost 30 years since we had played together and it was great to have an old pal at the house and we played live we played yesterday. It's great to be alive. And I am very happy today. I could maybe say it's the best period I've ever known in my life who would have thought at 55 I'd find my piece of paradise on this planet. happy St Niklaus to all of you. At the Wre it's also a great time in the history of music: like mine that there is a publication and a large group of great supportive people like you going here on the planet. Thanks to everyone for everything. aloha shalom namaste

**HRVATSKI**

Bone: Clouds (fossil and otherwise). Compilation. Colour And Pattern (Apostrophe). Finally seeing David's Towel and hearing the Dream House. The Gelbe-Musik shop in Berlin. Live: Gung. Davis on about 100 different occasions. Joseph Suohy & the A-Musik posse on about six. GTTCTTCTTCTAT at Sonar (plus non-pod, Non-Event, and the Playground new improvised music series giving Boston a much needed place to kick out. Lix. Recording: The Books. Thought For Food (Rome). Meliaue. Babelite the Goutier. Saint-Marcus. Immanuel (empresses DIGITALS). Talking on Harvard with Matmos. Touring. Nequam: Advertising (in general). Assumptions. CDs. Fashion zones. Irrelevancy due to lack of new product. Money. non-pod RRP. Plug and play solutions to the myriad problems inherent to performing electronic music live. Sunburn. Theft. Touring. Posterus: Everything all at once.

**PHILIP JECK**

Best albums of 2002:  
1) Missy Elliott Under Construction  
2) Young People Using People  
3) Diekda Each One Teach One  
4) Sison I Don't Want New Wave, And I Don't Want The Truth  
5) Entrance

Live bands:  
1) Valerie (Manchester)  
2) Arctic Urville  
3) Yeah Yeah Yeahs/Brian Chase  
4) Wolf Eyes  
5) Pan Sonic  
6) Llam

Prose: Aaron Krauss and Urson Stations live CD. She sings live Dolly Parton's sister. Gillian Welch's Elvis Presley blues, the best song about the King. Renwick KC Constantine's novels; great humour in the form of detective fiction. Meeting and playing with Jacob Hekkingard and Oava Van Subber. The sound system at a concert in Fribourg, Switzerland, at least everything is heard... Extensives as always. Travelling. All who still make music events happen. Cons: Travelling. Lonne Donegan has left the building. The rock island line was a nighty line and maybe the most important. Or Constantine's books being difficult to find in the UK. Many more, but too late and too late...

# Philip Jeck

STOKE (TOUCH)

## Kevin Drumm

SHEER HELLISH MIASMA (MEGO)

## Akio Suzuki

ODDS AND ENDS (HOREN)

## Henry Flynt

RAGA ELECTRIC: EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC 1993-71 (LOCUST)

## Henry Flynt

NEW AMERICAN ETHNIC MUSIC VOL 2: SPINDIZZY (RECORDED)

## BBC Radiophonic Workshop

BBC RADIOPHONIC MUSIC (BBC MUSIC)

## Henri Chopin/Varlous

REVUE OU (ALGA MARGHEN)

## Konstantin Raudive/Various

THE VOICES OF THE DEAD (SUB ROSA)

## William Basinski

THE DISINTEGRATION LOOPS (2042)

## If Bwana

I, ANGELICA (POGUS)

## Thuunderboy!

THUUNDERBOY! (TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS)

## Thuja

GHOST PLANTS (EMPEROR JONES)

## Mass Producers

PULSE III &amp; IV (MASS PRODUCERS)

## Erkki Kurenniemi

RECORDINGS 1963-73 (LOVE)

## Keith Fullerton Whitman

PLAYTHROUGHS (KRANKY)

## Compilations A-Z

## Bip-Hop Generation Vol 5

(BIP-HOP)

## Digital Disco

(FORCE TRACKS)

## Freedom Of The City: Small Groups

(EMANEM)

## Futurism

(CITY ROCKERS)

## Golden Years Of The Soviet New Jazz Vol 2

(LEO)

## Improvised Music From Japan

(IMPROVISED MUSIC FROM JAPAN)

## London Is The Place For Me:

Trinidadian Calypso In London 1950-56

(HONEST JON'S)

## No Bones For The Dogs:

Dubs From The Mighty Two 1974-79

(PRESSURE SOUNDS)

## Not Necessarily 'English Music'

(EMF/LEONARDO MUSIC JOURNAL)

## Playgroup: DJ Kicks

(STUDIO K7)

## Rough Trade Shops: Electronic 01

(MUTE)

## Rough Trade Shops: Rock And Roll 01

(MUTE)

## Studio One Scorchers: Instrumentals

(SOUL JAZZ)

## The Fire This Time

(HIDDEN ART)

## 2 Many DJs

(SOULWAX)

## Amalgam

PRAYER FOR PEACE (FMR)

## Albert Ayler

LÖRRACH/PARIS 1966 (HATOLOGY)

## Peter Brötzmann

FOR ADOLPHE SAX (UNHEARD MUSIC SERIES)

## Cabaret Voltaire

THE ORIGINAL SOUND OF SHEFFIELD 1970-82 (MUTE)

## Coldcut

JOURNEYS BY DJ (NINJA TUNE)

## Ornette Coleman

AT THE GOLDEN CIRCLE VOLS 1 A 2 (BLUE NOTE)

## Alice Coltrane

UNIVERSAL CONSCIOUSNESS (IMPULSE!)

## John Coltrane

A LOVE SUPREME DELUXE EDITION (IMPULSE!)

## Tony Conrad with Faust

OUTSIDE THE DREAM SYNDICATE 30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

(TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS)

## Die Tödliche Doris

KINDERINGELREIHEN FÜR WAHREN TÖREN DES GRAIS

(PSYCHEDELIC PIG)

## Paul Giovanni/Gary Carpenter/Magnet

THE WICKER MAN OST (SILVA SCREEN)

## Ground Zero

PLAYS STANDARDS (RER MEGACORP)

## Takehisa Kosugi

CATCH WAVE (SHOWBOAT)

## Phil Niblock

YPPGN (XI)

## Augustus Pablo

EAST OF THE RIVER NILE 25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

(SHANACHIE)

## Roger Reynolds

ALL KNOWN ALL WHITE (POGUS)

## Sun Ra & His Arkestra

MUSIC FROM TOMORROW'S WORLD (UNHEARD MUSIC SERIES)

## Taj Mahal Travellers

JULY 15, 1972 (SHOWBOAT)

## The Velvet Underground & Nico

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND A NICO DELUXE EDITION

(UNIVERSAL)

## Frank Wright

CHURCH NUMBER NINE (BLACK KEYS)

**KEVIN DRUMM**  
**SHEER HELLISH MIASMA**  
(MEGO)



He may be the "quiet man" of noise, but the abrasive electronic stabs and black Metal embers glowing on Sheer Hellish Miasma revealed Chicago's Kevin Drumm as a force to be reckoned with. We said: "Drums approaches... Metal almost alchemically, by harnessing a lumpen mass of spitting static and roaring feedback and transforming it into something that glows like a hot coal in the back of your skull..." (August/222)

**STEVE BARKER**

Pro: Musical cold turkey as prolonged spell in China dries up my daily fix of tunes and forces listening to absorb more than once; my radio show *On The Wire* is 16 years old in September 2002 - without any ceremony, maybe the reason for its longevity? the food in Sichuan; seeing Bob Dylan in Manchester after a 36 year gap; finding that learning to live without UK politics is easy

Con: Being away from home, drifting through the atomised lobby atmospheres of Beijing's international hotels with orchestral versions of "Groovy Kind of Love" and "Moon River" permeating the night; CNN, E!R, ESPN; the telecommunications business; realising how small the world really is.

**MIKE BARNES**

Pro: Visiting New York City in February and reading from Captain Beefheart at the Knitting Factory as warm-up for the extraordinary Fast 'N' Bulbs. Near seizure witnessing the Boredoms live in London. Most of this year's highlights feature people of 60 or thereabouts: meeting Shirley Collins and Ron Geeson; Brian Wilson and Arthur Lee live. Stacks of great music released. Presiding two Resonance 104.4 FM eight hour specials (on Captain Beefheart and Shirley Collins) on consecutive Sundays, and emerging as a sort of Dave Lee Travis of art radio on my weekly show, *Scratching The Surface*. Deciding this summer, after long and serious consideration, not to give up writing - just can't leave it alone. Walking holiday around Lyme Regis (I'll show you my snafu if you like).

Con: Music writing as minimum wage activity. Robbie recompense from book sales. Perpetual debt. Winter's block. Wasting time. Time shooting by. London, where every square metre of wall smells like it has been passed upon. Resonance FM hard to pick up. Compulsive CD buying. The greasy, channel stretch of chicken rotisseries in supermarkets. Brakapere's Henley brewery being bought up and sold off for development, and the mere existence of V-Shop as two examples of big corporations making our choices for us while smothering individuality into the ground. Upwards in general. Musicians' eggs (some of them). And as for the geopolitical situation...

**CLIVE BELL**

Pro: On stage in Harlow, watching an audience dance wildly as Henry Beckett's tenor spelt and withered over Jah Wobble's bass. The only thing to come close was a dinner of wild boar in a Spanish village restaurant. On record, Annette Krebs (*Gustaf Soly*) and Kurlie Matthews (*Zevende Mierl*) gave us glimpses of heaven. Nic Collins did the same with live feedback at October's Saggiage Festival club. Aiko Suzuki visited London with sea-sculptured glass flutes and long coils of wire, waiting a Shinto liturgy between the ampie and the uncanny. Theatre: the Redoxismus duo astonished with slapstick surrealism. Painting: Chris Old's Freedom One Day show at the Victoria Miro gallery was a chapel full of holy molyas. Radio: Resonance FM tore up the rulebook. Con: Do we really need to get this cozy on the sofa with President Bush?

**CHRIS BLACKFORD**

Pro: Finally following Hayamans, Montesquieu and Lorrain to the sublime Musée Gustave Moreau in Paris. Other enchanted places: Leighton House Museum, William Morris Gallery, Winchester Cathedral at choral evensong. Sonic enchantment: Perotin, Gesualdo, Lawes (William), Purcell, Scarby, Messiaen, Ravel (George), Trane, Vesala, Hermetil, Nelson (Bill), Reichel, Deep Purple Mk III and IV. Counterpoint enchantment: Michael Chenow, Drew Miller, Andrew Schell, Sharmanka Kiroto Theatre. Czech animation at MFF: Kojimr Molevich, Paul Mize at Hayward Gallery. Kenny Wheeler and Patrick Keller in Lyonstations. CBC: Tibor Szemzo Denube Endus (Les), Mike Atwood/Give Bell Sleep & Off (Zmanen), Pflaro Music From The Obscure (Dorian). Liquid enchantment: Monkey Picked Ti Kuan Ying, Guangxi Guitars. London walks with Gauth, writing his first novel. Impossible Figures And/Oz Dorian Point: the second one is now well underway, but who the hell publishes transgressive novels in the UK? Con: Central Serious Chiropractic.

**BEN BORTHWICK**

Pro: Spending six decadent months as a sleeper (with loads of time for writing) then six intense months in Liverpool for the Biennial (with no time for writing). Live: Sonic, especially Pan Sonic's wiggled-out collaboration with Peaches; The Wire's NYC parties; The Boredoms, Athens's Bios festival, Gestalt's death trap installation with Cheap wonderland Philip Quichenbarger live was totally extreme. Playback, upcoming. Kilmek (aka Random Inc) CD; Keith Fullerton Whitman; Add N To X; Manual, Telefon Tel Aviv, Jim O'Rourke's Mjog album. Art: Tatsuno Bash's Wils Victoria (absolute Kubrick); Documentic; Rodney Graham's hallucinatory knots; Expo, Nage, Meek and the Dutch masters. Interest free balance transfers.

Con: Spending half the year unemployed, and the other half alone. The near transcendent experience of the desert's psychedelic geometry turned to paranoia by the realisation I was two hours from the car and totally lost in the Joshua Tree. Duty's displacing his octopus rage. Still not figuring out MP3s.

**FELIX CEMMELL**

Pro: Started the year pursuing research for my final year degree dissertation on out-of-season music festivals in the UK. The first research took me to yearmouth seaside sitting in trailers in February! Worked as a runner at All Tomorrow's Parties LA and assisting David Lovening (Phases drummer) with his magic show in a quaint holiday village. Sat on the judging panel of the first round of the UK entry Groveson Song Contest (viralious). Graduated and met up with The Wire, where I started internimg. Roved the summer up in the Glastonbury Gledes and a Wap rave on a farm in Devon. Started running demo review workshops with the Music Producers Guild in conjunction with Sound On Sound magazine. Left High Wycombe at last and am preparing for a life on the road tour-managing and writing. Con: Saying goodbye to the musical geniuses and personalities of Gas Dugden, Alan Lorrain and Leadbelly.

## PHILIP CLARK

Pros: Sitting in the main square in Graz eating apple strudel before hearing Nicholas Hamoncourt and Piero Laurenti Armand play Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto—a perfect day; and as fresh an intent as anything heard this year; interviewing Lou Lush, Frederic Rzewski, Maggie Nicola and discovering Gloria Coates's music; hearing my own piano music performed in York by Ian Price; witnessing Cecil Taylor and Tony Oxley play the floor with the Bang On A Can All Stars at the Barbican; Ben Webster telling me he's got a sneaking admiration for Winifred Atwell; Lucien Roudot retrospective; Happiness, Inspiration and Friendship Tea; getting to grips with At Tatum; Six Feet Under and the return of Roda Norwick's Alan Partridge.

Cons: Watching the great British public operating handkerchiefs and hawking at the Royal during the Golden Jubilee; Bob Crow, Derek Smith and London Underground; watching a very bored BBC Symphony Orchestra play Morton Feldman; the Bechams, the Harrisons and other media tarts.

## MIA CLARKE

Pros: Kontakt apert photography/vinyl limited releases from Vinyl Magazine, Athens Smog Live. Cookery lessons in Florence. The Anticon Label. The Wire 20 at Butafra. Paris. Playing shows with Death in Vegas and Fugazi. Independent film showcases at Cinematheque, Brighton.

Cons: London Underground. Ignorant politics. Sacking Angus Deayton.

## JULIAN COWLEY

Pros: Barn owls. Reading Bill Griffiths's poetry. Rikki Ducornet's fiction. Gaston Bachard and Francis Yates. Oh My Porter on DVD. Catching up with Sergio Celibidache's extraordinary interpretations of Bruckner, Antonia Pabst. The Swan Silverstone. Talking at length with Terry Day.

Cons: Chicken pox. Death of Bob Cobbing. Peter Kowald and Earle Brown.

## CHRISTOPH GORD

Pros: Live music: Kim Gordon/Yike Moni/Marina Rosenfeld, Arthur Doyle's ragtag PoMo circus, and Brev (Amherst, MA); Set Fire To Flames, Merzbow/Pan Sonic, Mel Banana, Saboteur, Chicago Yoshida and The Necka (Victrola), QO, Visual art: Gerhard Richter at MoMA, Andrew Gump at Artlink/Chicago, Frontier House, The Sopranos, Architecture: Cy Twombly Museum and Rothko Chapel on a spring day. Radio: hosting A Thousand Plateaus on WUOL, Amherst. Philosophy: Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze, Manuel Delanda; Politics: growth of the US Green Party. Etc. Cabinet magazine, finally meeting The Wire crew in Brooklyn.

Cons: Auditory ailments; the Recording Industry Association of America and the Library of Congress destroy small Webcasters; the US moves further to the right; the naked belligerence of the Bush administration.

## ALAN CUMMINGS

Pros: Mono live at Sterling and on the cover of The Wire at last; the beatific Akio Suzuki; Maher Shalib live anywhere; summer weekend in Berlin; Aki Yabuko at Spitz; Acid Mothers providing the mellowest soundtrack to apocalypse at a sold-out O2; Ilek, finally getting to meet a genuine EVE and the gorgeous Yoshino; Machiko Takahashi cutting loose at the October Gallery; academic publication; Matsuyoshi Urabe in Hoxton Square and Chinatown; the usual simple solaces of silence, Keiko, friends, the wind and rain, food and booze... Cons: No Fushitsushu at Sterling; London; kneejerk responses to the Haino interview; work; late night energy rooms at Sotheby's hospital; chronic entropy and its impact upon my 'thesis'; CD-Rs; no holidays, no time, ever-consuming mountains of books and CDs that I know I'll never read/listen to; profligacy, selfishness, stupidity—and as ever, people.

## LINA DZUVEROVIC-RUSSELL

Pros: Starting off as Web Editor of The Wire, getting the Her Noise project off the ground; auditioning to NYC and Massachusetts; interviewing Kim Gordon, Marina Rosenfeld, Erase Errata, etc. for Her Noise; Jim O'Rourke's hilarious essays in the interview for Men in Experimental Music video; curating at the ICA; cycling through fields in southern Sweden in the summer; visiting Louisiana and seeing the Doug Arken show there; Vivienne Dick talk at the Whitechapel Gallery; Sonic Youth live; The Bonanzas at RHP; Peaches at the Great Eastern Hotel; Erase Errata at the ICA; Neonauts talk at Curb; Michael Moore.

Cons: Corporate media and reality TV; missing La Tigra's only London show while having an argument with best friend over dinner; working for the BBC for one hellish week; Her Noise not progressing as fast as I would have liked; not enough dinner parties.

## PHIL ENGLAND

Pros: Craig David plays the Whitehouse; Resonance FM; anti-war voices; the return of Grass.

Cons: Continued lack of appropriate response to climate change.

## KODWO ESHUN

Pros: Moving to my new house; becoming an uncle (hello Charlotte Herlo Ischer); traveling to São Paulo, Umeå, and Paris; visiting Malekiala in the Scottish Highlands, traveling to see Steve McQueen's brutal film Western Deep and David Small's startling interactive book at Documenta 11 in Kassel; travelling to Detroit, participating in Sonic Process at the Centre du Pompidou; Okwui Enwezor's amazing Shortlist Century catalogue; Robin DG Kelley's Protest Poems; Kevin Young's intertextual Basquiat epic; To Repeat Dreams; watching Six Feet Under; meeting Will Vimmer; Chris O'Farr's triumphant return to Victoria Miro; watching Anand Patwardhan's timely documentary War and Peace on nuclear nationalism.

Cons: impending nuclear annihilation; not hearing a fraction of the music I'd like to; not seeing my pieces enough; the great Antipap Consortium splitting up; the untimely death of James Stripes of Dracary, missing too many visiting groups to mention; no new book, addition to snappy British newspapers.

## MATT FYTCHE

Pros: His to be the re-emergence of Resonance FM—switching on the radio to catch the most fearless, fruitful and unfeasible music and spoken word on the airwaves—it really has provided some of the best and most listening experiences for some time. Which has coincided nicely with my being more housebound looking after my baby girl; earlier in the year hearing my partner producing these brilliant phased pulse loops using only placenta and foetus was a great musical restorative. Other books have been the discovery of Middle Class Records and the burgeoning productions of Nes.Co and Reductive Sparrow—the trash got us up and walking; September's 400,000 voices of protest at the anti-war demonstration in London were that Ann Wilkinson playing 'We Shall Not Be Moved' on Embankment pavement); and Evan Parker nipping at the South Bank.

Cons: Sleepless nights, a colicky baby and writing contortions in the body politics. The British government's support of America's ambitions in the Middle East; the model of Justice in Guantanamo Bay; and the witch hunt masquerading as freedom. Cap TV

## JON FORRIS

(+) Moving into a studio with a view onto the street (+) Petrol Given pavement slab cutters (+) Frank Bovey, Chris Back, Matthias Ev and Jase Walters who continue to produce beautiful and inspiring photography for The Wire (+) Delaware for inventing the humble piei with life, humour and colour; Vault 49's gorgeous portraits; the French design studio M+M; Laurent Fies for his inspirational book ABC (+) Having to take ABC+ back because the shrinkwrap tore the stickers off the front but mostly because this proves that stickers on book covers do indeed lead to more returns (+) Saunty's fonts; looking forward to Sleepatobed.com; Sleepatobed.com; Newstoday.com (+) Painfully slow 'broadband' connection (+) Magma: the best design bookshop in London; magazine: Creative Review, IDW, LAB, NED2, +B3, Polix, but especially K&A (+) Magma taking until October to get the spring issue of +B2 (+) IDEA magazine publishing a complete works of The Designers Republic (+) 2002: A Space Odyssey on DVD (widescreen at last!) Missing it on the big screen (+) Six Feet Under; BBC4 (B&K at Royal Opera House, etc); The Osbournes, the Ennemie accent on TV at last; The Office; Bo Selecta (+) ITV Digital putting the first two months after I signed up (+) Pushing Miro around the screen on Onifex King for the first time in over 15 years at the Barbican's Game On playground; Christian Wurster's Computers: An Illustrated History (+) Finally finding the Hat On Wall in the pissing rain; a warm and friendly non-generic pub at last and ten minutes walk from home too (+) Not getting out more (+) Being asked by Adrian Shoughnessy to show our work to the guys at intro (+) Our Powerbook refusing to cooperate with intro's state of the art; tiny data projector: built-in obsolescence (+) Axa-Chang and Jurny's "Hana" (getting to design the album sleeve too); Murco's Marlies; Kim Horby at Cargo getting to meet him too (+) Being interviewed for +B2; contributing work to Scandinavian design books North By North and 55 Degrees North (+) Digital photography; instant gratification (+) Dodgy memory cards that corrupt only those images you really want to use (+) Wildly optimistic late delivery promises.

## LOUISE GRAY

Pros: For energy and intelligence: Pina Bausch, the Wooster Group, Kimmo Pohjonen, Electrelaine in London for morose laughs. The Hindemith Family. For hysterical laughs. Fischerspooner. For pop tarts: Future Bible Heroes, Mylene Farmer. For trying: Matthew Giamore and the Shen Suite. For over-determination: Matthew Giamore's Commotus. For surprise: 'Hey Joe/Yes Factory' (with thanks, EV). For turning my head: JG.

Cons: The inevitability of an entirely available war seems to put all my glib whinges into perspective. Listen To The Fire This Time (Hidden Art) to realise just how inkstuous it is.

## ANDY HAMILTON

Pros: A year to discover, or rediscover, neglected voices in contemporary composition – visceral glissando-mantic Gena Costes, whose string quartets appeared on unitarily classical budget label Naxos, and Frank Denyer, Mawerick composer Denyer, for whom the label 'English Harry Partch' is as natural as it's misleading, has been taken up by John Zorn's Tzadik label – Fred City promises to outsell all his previous recordings (we're not talking megabucks here, of course). Denyer's concern with melody, individual tuning systems and homemade instruments shows him as a true original. Other pros: Safford Chamberlain's superb *An Unsung Cat*, biography of Cool School saxophonist and Braden here Warner Manes, Antoine Beauger's bizarre Spinoza tribute *Came Étienne* (Edition Wandelweiser); a growing realization that singing it is the best way to internalize the imposed line. Gaps of the year: too late for last year's *Revised* – Henry Dorn's best work, beguiling *Hushhush* at the Huddersfield Festival, reprised a year later at the Barbican, Jennel Mozdor, Corner House, Newcastle, April, Lee Konitz, Coventry Jazz Festival, August.

Cons: With Armageddon on the horizon, I'd rather dwell on the bright side...

## JIM HAYNES

Pros: Still being able to count on Thomas Köner, John Ounice, Siggeir Berg Sigmarsson, Troum, Monos and Philip Jeck for adventurous scores and drones. Being overstruck by the more rock-oriented excursions of Larsen, Lowieschnecker, Vincent Gallo, Noriko, Intrepid, etc., Sum(D), Devendra Banhart, Fuxsaka and The Jewelled Antler Collective. Hearing Neko Case's voice. Working with Monique Jenkins, 23Five Incorporated and Loren Choska (as always). Discussions with Giancarlo Toniatti about things aloof, and with Siggeir about things absurd. Big thanks go to Aqueduct Records for providing its employees with health insurance which covered my nice bladder surgery during the summer. My newly born niece Anna.

Cons: Not enough time to finish everything that needs to get done. Too much parasitic, ironic art in supposedly avant garde companies. My girlfriend Jennie getting dysentery in Barcelona and being hospitalized in a London hotel during our springtime vacation. A crazy economy that's continuing to fester. A bunch of medical problems throughout the year, and I'm only 30.

## RICHARD HENDERSOIN

Pros: Discovering, at an embarrassingly late date, the Protop Collection reissues (on Kora Sono/Phila) of Charles Duane's field recordings. The appearance of Nonesuch Explorer's African Vides with the deluxe packaging and remastered sound that they deserved in the first place. The appearance – at long last – of Terry Riley's wonderful *Athlete With Orchestra* (Babel) at San Francisco's Filmmore – elegant, funny, funny and unstoppable, just as though they'd never left returning to Los Angeles where, in short order, I witnessed: an awe-inspiring demonstration of group mind, courtesy of a Balinese gamelan at the Wilshire Blvd; the once and future Deaf performing on top of a 3D foot platform amid a swarm of airborne skateboarders, BMX cyclists and motorcross racers at the Anaheim Pond; Thomas Struth's photography at MDCA and, best of all, the re-established radio ministry of Rev Dan and his wonderful *Musica For Musicians* on KXLU in LA – four decades of transgressive music; for three hours, every Saturday morning before sunrise mandates my return to the crypt.

Cons: Jangism proving its enduring value as a smokescreen for all that is slished and nefarious in American politics: bullying foreign policy, energy mismanagement, weakened environmental protection, racial profiling. Impressive research neglected by Jimmy McDonough's unedited, self-flagellating prose in the long-avoided – and ultimately dreary – Neil Young bio, *Shakey*. Everybody and their dog recording silent films; the Walkman will inevitably triumph. RIP: Esquivel, Speedy Lee, Karen, Luca Parnell, Lord Prender, Arthur Lyman, Peggy Lee.

## KEN HOLLINGS

Pros: Talking Destroy All Monsters to E-Work in Berlin for Transmediale D2, meeting up with Rechenzentrum, Column One and everyone at Juliette Liternation, Graham Messer's Toothed live at the OGH, Siren Sufo's CD set at the Royal Festival Hall, recording *Dead From Above* with Simon James for *IsolaWorld*, Rechenzentrum's *Destroy All Monsters* remix, this year's *Solar Festival*, Tommaso And Vices from Saboteur, Kamberley and Martin McGarrett at the Horse Hospital creating new music for films, the Climas Sisters making a new soundtrack for Irving Karp's *Seattle Page* loops, the *Dawn Of The Dead* remake, the 70 24-hour box set, remastered on CD, Deke Derbyshire's BBC Radiophonic work being made available again, giving evidence before the International Neurological Society's Second First Committee Hearings at the Qutb Gallery. Heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in the above.

## HUA HSU

Pros: Another healthy, 'just DK' (which is actually fantastic) year that started (and will likely end) at the Donut Wheel. Positive stops in-between: On-stage with Outkast for 'Bombs Over Baghdad', Barry Bonini's musicalistoid *ovide*, Pedro's sneering grace, Motab's girmy TDS, Barry's passage from boy to man (though it was, indeed, a fumble), the A's 'rolling on 2Ds', Duran's homer and Cline's sawp, and Jam Master Marshall Faulk's Booy pose. Jazzbo bringing heat at the Enormous Room. Sandwiches at Camary's, beef at \*\*\*. The Golden Temple and the Gato Rigo. Three words. Buckwheat on MTV. Sunned down, volume high and pride out the window while screaming along to 'We Are The Pigs'. My boy Franklin. A good 9/11. Hawaii Little League. A Hummer trip through Jersey. Moving to The London. Hallucinations after many sleepless nights of World Cup. Grandfather: 'I used to play hockey too, so I like Cebu.' Getting my mind right and letting some demons pass. Stay true to the game, I think. Cons: Game Seven. Game Seven. Game #1333 Seven. Worse than that? Game Six! We was sex out away... 1918... 1962... 1985... 1988... oh the horror. Speaking of which, George Bush and his People. 'More limitless than the immigrants of the means.' 'All things considered, few things as bad as those Comen. But still...'. *Get Right* as Memorable Moment? 'That Minsubuk Chik?' Escalating at Tompkins's after football highlights. Getty knocking over the Moleman at The Wire party (and no annual basketball game/Critical Beats-down). Teenage punks. RIP Darby Kilo... Jack Black... Jam Master Jay... the possibility of justice in this world (Nes. Game Seven and 34, 35, 36, and good tidings to that goddess, terrible Billy Monkey.

## DAVID KEENAN

Pros: Living out in Argyll, and in sight for England's *Alison* *Alison*; Sarah; Le Weekend; Key Hans soundtrack; working with Christian Hermon and Andrew Cook of Mirror on new Teister Pokes album *Low* in Sarveit; Jim Dodge's *Run On The River*; Current 93 live in London; discovering *After Jay*; A *Koyote To Arcturus* book in print; Tartarus Press and their new Denon Welch biography; William Basinski's *The Disintegration Loops*; back issues of *Black To Comm*; Dead Box; Dylan Live 1975 and A *Real Walk Thru*; William Parker Quartet and Parker's *Sound Journal*; Nether Street Hash Bar holdout in Argyll; Teri Kuzio's workshop in Strling; fancy photo opportunity with Shizuka at last; days at Lower Sillage, farmers' markets, the Argol countryside; Globe Unity Orchestra live; inspirational CCA panel discussion alongside Evan Parker, Raymond MacDonald and George Burd; doing *seventeen* for Albert Ayler's *Avits De La Fondation Maugit* and the bag for 24 Hours Of 10; Tibet & Dr's wedding; Karl Blake, Steve Stapleton, Shirley Collins, Joe Bidenholder, Simon Norris and Steve Throver, Julian Cope – U Know; Mick & Dave at S&P; encouragement from Mike Barnes; Steve Joerg comes to visit, *American Magus*, diving with Rose; Dr Who DVDs; Raymond Pro, sliding on baking trays on New Year's Eve; Desperate Bicycles' 'Advice On Arsed'; the view from Durand; Gwan Sempier's *Spare* android; Bill Breese's information hotline; Razlitz boxes; Monorail – a hot new record sold in Glasgow at last; Keri's Dunes; listing both volumes of Aubrey's *Monuments Britannia*; William Lawes; Maggie like A *Fucking Set*; Eclipse and Keston mal-order *Wellness*; Sunburned Island Of The Man; Mckay's *Grateful Dead* bag; Joshua/M/Dr/Deane; countless great NMC off-shots; Alan Cummings and his talk at Le Weekend; Rootlet From The Tomb; desire of consistently great AMT product; 'The Seahorse Reals To Oblivion', return of Vanc; visit to Nantes, meeting Jas Burroughs; boozing with The Dubinens, Thomas James, Aquinas set burning everything in sight, 'perjury' and gone' crazy... Cons: Hans bun scare; Caledonian Macbrayne's appalling Fifth of Clyde ferry service, missing Jackie-O, Urabe and Vibracoustic Orchestra live; no Jazz Em Agato for me this year; grown men in trainers; holiday camp talent shows as 'reality' TV; moral crusades and witch-hunts; farmers; the Countryside Alliance; AMT as ostrochows for terrible indie labels; Armin's Krovac meme; Dee Dee Ramone & Peter Kwakid RIP..

## ART LANGE

Pros: Summarize the past 12 months in 150 words or less? Please. I will confess my strongest musical pleasures come rummaging through jazz of the 20s and 30s, rediscovering the Charleston Chasers, Joe & Marty Marsala, Muggsy Spanier, Hank Tschamkner, Cliff Jackson & His Crazy Rats, Niff Moie & His Moies... Seriously Cons: Read the newspaper.

## ALAN LICHT

Pros: I'd never been a big fan of Wilco — liked *Being There*, *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, and a live show I saw last spring, but their show at Roseland in October was mesmerizing. They've integrated folk, experimental, pop, indie rock, rock 'n' roll, etc., to perfection, leaving *The Flaming Lips*, *Roadhead* and co in the dust, and they've got better chops too (check out those Gianni Ntzsche side projects). It's also never been a big John Sayles fan, but his film *Sunshine State* is brilliant, a finely woven portrait of small town failures. Jimmy McDonough's over the top, R&B page Neil Young biography is cranked and illuminating, and made me hear Young's '70s and '80s output anew. Also: Mission Of Burma's reunion, Peter Coffin's plant music exhibition/project, the new print of Harry Smith's *Mahogany*, Gail D'Amico's show-stopping rendition of Liz Phair's "Fuck And Run" at the Chieftack 10th anniversary series, Peter Bittmann's painting exhibition in Tel Aviv, Charles-Amont Palestine's *Music For Big Ears*, Jay Babcock's fantastic farcical *Arthur*. Cons: The return of the Cold War, too much hype about the current NYC rock scene, the deaths of John Entwistle, Peter Howland and Dee Dee Ramone, Arthur Lee not quite remembering which version of Love I played in; An Emotional Memory Of Martha Quinn not making the Oprah book club...

## DAVE MANDL

Pros: Virtually every record released on Blue Note between 1950-75; iconizing of Resonance FM, London; growing preference of young people for electronic and experimental music; sitting in second row for taping of a fantastic Blue Note/Televisio interview, seeing the exceedingly rare Billy Wilder film *Amé* in *The Heat*; exploring every inch of Brooklyn, NYC, for a photography project; seeing Benji for the first time; playing drums in WPMU's Heart And Mouth Sinfonia. Cons: Widespread suffering and joblessness caused by the US recession; RMA's attempts to crush Webcasting.

## BRIAN MARLEY

Pros: The Bruegels at Vienna's Kunsthistorische Museum, which literally made me weep at the knees. Getting intentionally lost for an hour or more in the sunny backstreets of Shibuya, Tokyo. Long walks and strong violence in the visual field: William Eggleston at the Hayward Gallery, perhaps the best photography exhibition I've ever seen, Gert Hofmann's Luck, and Gilbert Sorentino's Gold Pools. Conversations about music (and life) with John Abbey, Robert Bruce, Andrew Davis, Chris Blackford, Fred Grand, Andy Hamilton, Thomas Lethin, Andres Rodriguez, Keith Rowan, John Wall and Mark Westall, thank you all. The CD I've played most often this year: Peter Garland's *The Days Run Away* (Tzadik). Cons: George W Bush fighting terror with terror. Fearing to secure quiet accommodation. Worrying more about the latter than the former.

## JEROME MAUNSELL

Pros: Moving one floor up to the flat above in London at the start of the year, three days of Heavy Metal at All Tomorrow's Parties down by the sea in Cambridge, sending a pig at the Brighton Concordia, endless sunlight, ferry rides and the chill-out room at Konopko in Helsinki, William Eggleston's photographs at the Hayward Gallery, a weekend in Cornwall; the British Library, the British Museum; seeing Sir Sir Fraser's *The Golden Bough*, as well as Rick Moody's memoir/book-length digression on guilt and confusion: *The Black Test*, Jonathan Lethin: Peter's first novel! Everything is Illuminated, Ryszard Kapuscinski's *The Shadow Of The Sun*, working for a few weeks at *The Wire*; attempting to learn Swahili in Zanzibar; moving to Dor es Silemon in Tanzania towards the end of the year. Cons: Fear and loathing: Vaccinations, CNN.

## ANNE HILOE NESET

Pros: The Wire 2D projects and celebrations in Paris and NYC. Curating travelling sound art extravaganza *Her Noise*. Collaborating with the Norwegian Embassy: The Alice Coltrane interview, Leif Eggen, MS, behind Ray Rorer's mission in Victorville, Nevada. The Last Samurai by Helen DeWitt. Barnett Newman at Tate Modern, Thomas Hirschhorn at Barbara Gladstone and Anselm Kiefer at Gagosian Gallery. Will Doherty, Shirley Collins set back, Resonance FM. Palm Springs. On stage: Boredoms at London's RFR, Kim Gordon singing "I Wanna Be Your Lover" with Anthon, Anthon, Melinda interview at LA's All Tomorrow's Parties, Euse Euse and ESG at the ICA, Le Hains at the Brussels Document Festival, Peaches here and there and everywhere, Tidd Gras Ooh Stealer live in rural Sweden, Isiah Sholish's London Orbits (the event, film and book), Super\_Collider at Rome's Dissonance festival. Cons: RRP Jam Master Jay, Ray's Jazz Shop replaced by baguette bouquies. Really TN. Still not owning a dog. Bush & Blair. Power caused art centre directors (always male), inefficiency.

## IAN PENMAN

Pros: Dr Meco's a first time: shout comrades parallelous ruins and two-tone familiar cuts white spirals and a double rainbow. In-fro' traces achieved live model rock and thunder of Coir's unbelievable Remote Viewer and my own private gold leaf inscribed copy from John Balance to "Eon Panman". Cool live two times, two singularities: in-fro's sex pistol electronic full of lava and sperm and laughter and prober and cheer and naked men handing out apples. Chris Marker CD-ROM journey (the left/split/catal), realising that I still had original "Guns Without A Car" on VHS and wasn't that 2002 through and through somehow? Archive grows monthly more exciting than anything in real time; Harry Smith's moody anger Gordon Mumma Jack Nitzsche Luciano Berio & Edwin on Alice Coltrane & finally (thank you SJ Angus McGuire's invasion Of The Thunderbolt Pagoda exceeds more than anything, except Cool this year, being a year when you took what you could get wherever you might find it. Which included: M2S Debut; Secret Mook Experiment comp (Blat Piat) exp Joan of As "The Diddy Now"; The Royal Family; the William T. Vollmann version; and finally a copy of Jack Parsons's blog Sex & Rockets: Sex Travel video; Straub Huillet documentary at ICA; Herzog On Herzog; Vincent Gallo Recordings Of Music For Film; Tanah's Wits; Claus Rothpeter; Leif Eggen & CM Van Haussewoff's *Kew X*; Eggleston; Vergardend 1992-2002; Random Dance Music & Scanner Networks at Saenger's Wells; Martin Sheen ranting at God In Love; King Kong Debut; Debut; Debut; Debut; Debut; Debut; Turkish coffee and red shoes; Bar Simpson sensually verbalism: "I am familiar with the work of Pablo Neruda..."; pre-flood Prague; the grave of Rabbi Loew and Kalle's beautiful modelist plot in the rain and my first ever opera; bad weather stopped Cope trail in Cornwall but Ian Hamilton Finlay at Tate St Ives offered sublime shelter; Georgia Bladelet: An intellectual struggle by Michel Surya (my book of the year) and other dispatches; Peter Wolter's Paris Hollywood; Siegfried Zerk Welcome To The Desert Of The Real, Baudrillard Screened Out (all last four on Verso; publishers of the year); London Review Of Books delectably dull on LB but only place for decent commentary on Bush/ Iraq/ Iran; the cat on Isla Mujeres, where out of nowhere, at combined cash sawery and secondhand bookshops, I found a copy of WGSE's Last Words: "Most natural penkicker what there is, LOVE". Cons: "Oh rose, thou art sick": death of our beloved cat, Bobo; starting year with sad unnecessary funeral (and then one in spring... and then one in autumn); unfunny morning (Dear: Iloilo Valley by John Codes); disappointing Aes U.P.; rip-off sexualisation; CD clocks on Crowley and Dee; faith-destroying night at Barbican with coke-bone Mouse On Mars' fans' with whom I nearly got into fistfight; unbelievably dispiriting John Lydon interviews; writing so much but finishing so little; in proposed Magick & Music piece for *The Wire*; hospital visits; dips in share price; PISCO Corp. not enough & to really keep up with CD flood: the way a critic should; decided lack of invitations to collaborate on global multimedia projects; our Taliban tabloids' messianic swings between gruesome alleged criminal sentimentality & dark age fearmongering (Myra Hindley as 'the devil', royal family as daily disaster methadone, celebration as one big wild train); the ghastly film sucking leg George Bush's only sick; constant shallowness; evil.

## TOM PERCHARO

Pros: Thrifty Ear and Matthew Snipp's brilliant Blue Series, only 985 records away from being a Blue Note for our time. The Royal Opera's Wozzeck, Dagblat & 24hrs. Scratch Carl Hancock live on DJ Spooky's *Optometry*. Unbelievable music writing — Dave Tompkins in this magazine. More style at Warford. The Tom Chent/Seymour Wright Tokyo Showdown. Dried figs, the fruit of the future. The food of life. The drink of Belgium. The sounds of New York. The sights of New Cross. Drums in general. Cons: Gullies in general. David Bowie's Metelidon censorship. The LMC's withdrawal of funding for Eddie Piller's improvisation workshop. Unbelievable music writing — the Guardian's James Griffiths. The independent's Shoto Byrnes. Ashanti, the Samed Jazz of HipHop. Anyone apart from Hajdu who values jokes in music.

## BOWIN POUNCEY

Pros: Boredoms at Festival Hall, Neil Young at Etrich Academy, Koji Haino's solo performance and William Parker's talk at Le Week-end 2002, Stirling, The Peppermint Prower. Having a regular weekly slot on Resonance104.4 FM. Trip Dr Square, Jackie O Motherfucker and Philo Jack at Instants Chavallas, Paris. Meeting up with Ivie Cohen, and later finding a copy of his rare and beautiful 7 Minutes publication. Being invited to look through Daniel Gaur's Sun Ra record collection at his flat in Paris; then looking out of the window to see an incredible vision of the sun lighting up the Eiffel Tower after a heavy storm had passed over. Trip, Gail Deh Steiner at Neon Gallery, Broccoli. Curator Mark Webster's experimental film section at the 2002 London Film Festival. Cons: 9/11 aftermath. Frank Tovey RP. The closing of Ray's Jazz Shop and his Blues And Roots basement. The durning down of London's West End.

## MOSI REEVES

Pros: Music as a singular experience, Peter Agoston's *Culturemag*; *Wier Poetics* magazine; *Botanica del Albar*; chicken noodle soup; Bas-; Boom Bop's Seed To Sun; Kitchen Sink posse; Dabry; Def Jax's continued dominance; Of Shadow live; bedroom hip-hop producers (insight, Eden); music journalism as transcendence instead of promotion; DJ Spiner; Bored Collective. Cons: Being broke; owning a broken heart without even a kiss to show for it; New York City's media mafia; late-night burrito; Oakland's sky-high murder rate; Murder, Inc; Antipod Consortium; breaking up; Jam Master Jay RHP; outrageous publicists; soda pop; The Neptunes (enough already); cokehead; Eternity's apostolists.

## SIMON REYNOLDS

Pros: UK Garage goes GABA and gangsta; guitar rhyms, sick nose, grry bass and skullcrusher beats from Ditty Rascal, Musical Muck, Black Ops, etc; Britpop finally sheds its 'nostalgia' reputation with the Streets and Fatm Yerd, plus Georgia Kru, Horia Squad, More Fire Crew heading a hungry horde of 'Garage rap' collectives, not forgetting MC Pitman, Sleev Shectum's Talon Slalom, Gamine Versus Japan's Whole Numbers, BOC's Greogrids, Honespore Productions. Electroclash/No Wave, better in theory than practice, glorious exceptions being Niga's *Gigolo* mix CD, Waka, Ghazzy's *Disco Nouveau* comp (especially Legawatt and Solvent), Lisa Kru, Summer in London (DJ Marky & XRS supply the sunshine with drum 'n' bassa nova anthem "UK"), A Day in Sheffield, The British Library's National Sound Archive. Meeting old heroes and liking most of them again or take the old embittered fuck. EMO conference in Seattle. The Church of Mr. Rounding Bullard. Hanging with Keanu. Cons: The geopolitical predicament looming ahead.

## TOM RIDGE

Pros: Decadent masterpiece from Goodspeed 'You! Black Emperor and Low, David Lynch's return to form with Mulholland Drive, Rick Poyner's "Obey The Giant", Vietnam in Iran; rediscovering old friends and making some new ones; my new non-urban lifestyle. Cons: The usual round of cynical marketing plays and disappointing people; the endless stream of rock 'n' roll; George W Bush; opinion poll culture; being hit by a car and spending the summer on crutches.

## STEPHEN ROBINSON

Pros: Dazzlingly large-scale musical events; Zeligaster's mammoth eight-hour Geburtstag party for John Cage at Berlin's Posthof in September; live hours and 35 songs by Peter Hammill at the Lync Theatre, Hammersmith in June (including witnessing Hammill's debt and dignified demise of an afterhours eulogy to Gentle Giant). Master Shalal Hash Bar and Kiki Hano in Stirling. Doctored. Berlin. Cons: Fushiyatshi's no-show in Stirling. A summer of extreme fragmentation, post-doctoral anxiety, and the wide-reaching and decimating effects of a particularly virulent strain of emotional abuse (few survived). Failure to complete Aufgehoben/Groß Smith 3 inside a year. Carpat.

## PHILIP SHERBURNE

Pros: Severance checks and self-employment made the days a lot more bearable. Creamer 3 split open the screen with a theremin squall and a Gaelic lament. Felix Rubin. Stephan Metzku. Janek Schaefer. Philip Quakenberger. Metro Area, and Atom Heart/Ricardo Villalobos/Ondrej Jack made five more worthwhile. MUTEK just got better and better. Christian Marclay's Video Quartet turned video mang on its ear. Cons: Underemployment. Acceleration. Fake nostalgia. Feeling old. The gradual implosion of the magazine racket. Coyote protest. The death of exciting music. The relentless quest for novelty. Getting paid. Second guessing. Dead time. Dubya and all he represents - and - weakas. The rightward trend worldwide. Poor. Silence.

## DAVE TOMPKINS

Pros: Friends and family to the rescue through the fire (Kahn); NC summer; Ghostface picking flowers over Sunshine Anderson instrumental, the electro-poly-outside-Hard-Meat remix of Tech Gaddy's "In The Wind"; may be fed as many quarters as "Giddy"; which would be enough to keep Cee-Lo in cereal for a year (MTV Cids); so Cee-Lo can keep making beautiful songs like "Baashad Jazz"; bust taken on a Blue Ridge rock with three ravens and a low riding sun; DJ Soundmachine cutting up "Looking From A Hilltop (Remix)" on WNRN-FM, Raleigh, doing the "Black Hole Rock the Clock Shop"; the great midnight cabers, taking Hellcat with Walter and Laito; Laito at Mercury Lounge; DJ Shadow's live release of "Stems" at Roseland; Nofu from Darter: "Bell Magic Mike to inscribe it. Get the batzooks out of Iraq and under the driver's seat... MM." Dreams to remember: 1) Dynamic 2 performing "Purple Beaks" on Outkaster; 2) The Mike sent Hu Hsu and I to interview Shinya Easton at her story of horror memorabilia which included a shrine to Rondo Hatton and Famous Monsters of Filmland Editor and "pawling" Fory Ackerman, who in real time, had taken seriously; 4) Hu looks at Shinya's art brushed Red Fox tapestry and says, "If the Cons, man, this is all right!" Cons: Ali/Pitro can't stop all the president's men and their loifists; can't listen to The Roof & On Fire anymore; damn the Manhattan skyline looks vulnerable from any scotches; "Watch you gon' do without no ass?" asks Sun Ra, Jo Lo Tongo and Mike Ladd in "Nuclear War"; Without Jam Master Jay, we can't "Run-Run-Run-Run-Run".

## DAVID TOOP

Pros: Discovering the very wonderful singer Santarone in Chang Mai, along with her fabulous restaurant; with Scanner, Lawrence English and i/D in Brisbane; wombats, bats and we in Melbourne; Jessica exhibits in Zagreb; Wai in Prague, sound effusion in Toronto and Montreal; Desert from a distance, the Pang brothers; Not Necessarily 'Electric Music'; with Cobbing and Burwell at The Kinkor; Lol Cohl's 70th; Snow, botanical gardens and Takeshi Mike in Montreal, Silver Space on the Thames; Aki Suzuki; 49 Americans rescued. Cons: Bob Cobbing's death; the short life of my new G4 and all other computer problems; world politics; homesickness.

## DAN WARBURTON

Pros: Marie & Max as ever; finally got to release a new thing (shots out to Mike Bullock at Ché, Jon Mueller at Croun, Nicolas Molevsky at Asgard, David Tibet at Durtro and Benoit Sommette at Seattle) and play with great musicians (thanks to Jon Rose, Bruce Meller, Scott Rosenberg, Greg Kelley, Shob Raney) and exchange ideas with many more (photos to Joelle Leandre, Dave Grubbs, Jack Wright, Axel Dörner). Pouilly Fussé, Derek? I'll settle for a Chablis Grand Cru 'Les Clos'. Cons: CDN is the right word in French for the workaholic person who blew his shit up my nose at a godawful sweat whose name I won't mention, the only place you can get an improv gig in Paris... 'Capital of World Music'? MY ASS. Worthful lack of anywhere decent to play here apart from Les Instants Chavivis. We won't talk about politics. What else? Oh yes, not enough shelf space for CDs.

## BEN WATSON

Pros: Exemplified Tuesdays at the Royal College of Art, more improv cover than space permits (thanks be to Lantz), but also hot verbiage: Batsyke in the R Cafe on 12 March, and Boney/Helson from Cu-De-Qu - Writers Forum continued (if you want to go exemplistic, see: [www.militantartsite.co.uk](http://www.militantartsite.co.uk)); Cecil/Olvey at the Barbican; Zappanale #13; Andy Wilson/Ian Lane for pushing dialectic and controversy; Derek 'n' Stu 'n' Marie, long live the scratchy 'n' 'n'chy angst-in-your-pant; the massive 2nd September 2001 Attack Iraq demo in London - Free Palestine!, Med-Pe in Cardiff, Dallas, Dallas, Boney, Magda Noels, Chocolate Sandwich, Ape Shit & Matt Fraser at The Bull & Gate; Down With the Mental Health Bill; Ken Fox's Inventory Of Zeros; Raja Duryavasyakaya on freedom, Vladimir Vernadsky on the biosphere, Hermann Samuel Reimarus on the Art Instincts of Animals; the upshot of Matthew 'Quacken' Hagies - somebody actually READS this stuff, how congratulating; Cons: Bob Cobbing, goodbye. ☐

## THE ELECTORATE

This year's charts were compiled from the votes of the following contributors (each contributor's individual Record of the Year shown in brackets):

Steve Barker (Atom?/Small Rocks/The Rap Off Artist Dub Tribuni), Mike Barnes (Susumu Yokota The Boy And The Tree), Clive Bell (Pocket Pocket), Chris Blackford (Trio Serrano Evadne Evadne), Marcus Bone (Broken Souls Scene You Forget it in Propag), Ben Northwick (Keith Fullerton Whitman 21:30 For A Good Cause), Felix Cernelli (AsiaChang & Johnny Jun Jay Song Change), Philip Clark (John Smith Dubcut), Mike Clarke (Boards Of Canada Geogrids), Julian Cowley (Elaine Radgus Adnos MW), Christoph Cox (Derek Bailey Ballads), John Craschly (Tin Hat Trio The Roasio Eroded), Alan Cummings (Takeshi Kousagi Catch-wave), Phil England (Various The Fire This Time), Kōdō Eshun (Antipod Consocium Arrhythmies), Matt Hyde (Captain Beefheart & The Magic Band Odeogrids), Louise Gray (Kinnno Polytone Kluster), Andy Hamilton (Frank Denyer Fired City), Jon Heynes (Devendra Banhart On Me Oh My...), Richard Henderson (Terry Riley Atlantis Meth), Tony Harrington (Various Improvised Music From Japan), Ken Hollings (Signal Territory Signal Territory), Hui Hui (Antonia) Electric Love And Other Scenarios, David Keenan (Vajra Mandala Cat Last), Biba Kopf (Vajra Mandala Cat Last), Art Lange (Charlie Christian The Genius Of The Electric Guitar), Alan Licht (Charmekane Palestine Music For Big Zee), Dave Mendi (Frank Pahl & Kimpere Music For Desserts), Doni Marini (Polwechsel & Fennec Wrapped Islands), Jerome Marquis (Gustav Velthug Dungen Music), Will Montgomery (Radion Red Extrem), John Mulvey (DJ /Rupture Milwaukee Suite), Anne Hilde Neeset (Barbara E & Peggy Ahwesh Radio Guitar), Tom Penford (Craig Taborn Light Made Lighten) Edwin Pounory (Philip Jack Stone) Simon Reynolds (The Streets Original Prints Material), Tom Ridge (Goodspeed Wake Black Emperor Vajras UCD), Stephen Robinson (Maya Rajale Vocal, Uina Douvrenko-Russell) (Sonic Youth Murray Street), Peter Shapiro (Venus 2 Many Ds As Heard On Radio Souleux Part 2), Phil Sherburne (Jonathan Bepler Creamer 3), Dave Torriens (EIP Faber/Danig), Elisabeth Vinetelli (Dim Den Kiv), Dan Warburton (Toshya Yasuda Pecca Of Art), Ben Watson (Cool Taylor Feet The 2 Is For A Lovely 2), Barry Witherden (Tobias Delius Quartet Peukistennus), Rob Young (Sonic Youth Murray Street)

# Charts

## Playlists from the outer limits

### Beijing Dub 15

**Sleazy Ranks**  
Jah Is Guiding I Version (John John 7")  
**Calek**  
Clutch & Spit Out (Rhythm Track 7")  
**King Asher**  
Drink Angle Pt. 2 (Pinehouse 7")  
**Public Black**  
Push/Pull Version (Studio One 7")  
**The Mercenaries**  
I Against Rome Version (Mummy 7")  
**King Telly**  
Traditional Dub (Clocktower 7")  
**Ray Dobson**  
African Rast (Phat 7")  
**Heb-Hap All Stars**  
Mystery Babylon Version (Heb Hap 7")  
**Upstarts**  
Ketch A Dub (Orchid 7")  
**Big & Bunkle**  
King Pion Riddim Version (Power 7")  
**Augustus Pablo**  
Mikulu On (Spectrum 7")  
**Joe Gibbs & The Professionals**  
No Bones For The Dogs (Town & Country 7")  
**Upstarts**  
Lend Of Dub Impact 7")  
**Winston Wright & Impact All Stars**  
Wood Pecker (Impact 10")  
**Rhythm & Sound**  
No Pariah (PK 10")

Compiled by Steve Barker, Club FM at Rite  
Gongyuan Nan Men, Beijing

### Low Yo-Yo Stuff 15

**Captain Beathart**  
Enrui catalogue  
**Soft Machine**  
Zowie catalogue  
**Tony Williams/Ariane**  
Arc Of The Testimony (Arcane)  
**Urinale**  
Negative Capability... Check It Out (Ankrick)  
**Gurgles Island**  
Fourth (Short Bang)  
**Kurtis Tappert**  
Dedicated To You, But You Weren't Listening  
Vongorak/Morm  
**John Sorman**  
Inevitable Nature (SCM)  
**Bees Gees**  
Gumbar Gude (Aton)  
**Heartwood Mac**  
Bare Trees (Winter Brawl)  
**Hvo Hoodies**  
Yellow Light Luck (Dust Bunny)  
**Boredoms**  
Super Ace (Birdman)  
**481US**  
In A Bar, Under The Sea (Beng)  
**Buzzcocks**  
Simplex Going Steady (BM)  
**Crescent**  
EP (Kassick)  
**Raine**  
Toomborghs (Space)

Compiled by Low Yo-Yo Stuff Records,  
265 W Washington St, Atlanta, GA 30601, USA,  
lowyo@midasnet.com

### Hydra Head 15

**Bolton And Der Club Of Gore**  
Black Earth (Siz)  
**Scavo(1)**  
Flight Of The Behemoth (Southern Lord)  
**Low**  
Trent (Kronk)  
**David Cross**  
Shut Up You Fucking Baby (Sub Pop)  
**Godspeed Your Black Emperor**  
Tanya LHO (Carnalbeat)  
**Kathie Redfern Whiteman**  
Playthroughs (Kronk)  
**Black Heart Procession**  
Amore Del Rappos (Touch 'N' Go)  
**Jonathan Colclough**  
Pineal (Amoricide)  
**Hummers Of Multitude**  
The Bastard (Tennu)  
**Dead And Gone**  
The Discretion (SBL)  
**Mirror**  
Scars (Die Stadt)  
**Black Dice**  
Beaches And Canyons (DFA)  
**Pelican**  
Dense (Self-released)  
**Tin Hocke**  
My Love Is Rustin To The Core (Alumid)  
**Orkheim**  
Entire catalogue

Compiled by Hydra Head, Box 660038, Boston, MA  
02124, USA, www.hydrahead.com

### The Office Ambience

**Truckstop**  
Truckstop To The Rescue (Soft City 12")  
**Zelkovaizer & Terre Thematics**  
3 (see Superlatives) (Constancia/Knabner)  
**LCD**  
93 30" LCD  
**Bonnie Prince Billy**  
Master & Everything (Domini)  
**Shirley Collins**  
Within Sound (Fing'ring)  
**Suzanne Branson**  
So Easy Hard To Practice (Disko B)  
**Brinkbach**  
Looks At The Bird (Thel Jockey)  
**Kevin Colclough**  
You Run EP (Dadim)  
**Alex Hato & Ryusaki Sakamoto**  
Wusun (Raster Noise)  
**Sekado**  
Underneath (Machines)  
**Crack: We Are Rock (WARD)**  
Silent Fantasy (Tigermoss)  
**Don-Dequatre & Kelli Heino**  
Free Rock (PST)  
**The See & Coko**  
One Bedroom (The Jockey)  
**Puma Programming**  
Tulsa For One Second (Kassick)  
**Spectre**  
Psychic Wars (Worldsound)

Compiled by The Wire Sound System

We welcome charts from record shops, radio shows, clubs, DJs, labels, musicians, readers, etc. Email charts@thewire.co.uk

Score: Youth's studio ambience chart: see 2002 Review, page 44

**ZEN**  
PALATIN

**OFFICE AMBIENCE, 15**

1. STYX - GRANDILLUVISION
2. SUPERTRAMP - TAKE THE LONG WAY HOME
3. AMERICAN SANDMAN
4. DOOBIE BROTHERS - ANOTHER PARK, ANOTHER SUNDAY
5. GERRY RAFFERTY - GIVE ME A CHANCE
6. THE DAMNED - HELP
7. THE GREENGRASS - CHERRY RED
8. PATTON - THE SEAGRAM
9. SPARKS - THANKS, BUT NO THANKS
10. JUDEE SILL - JESUS WAS A CROSSBURNER
11. WHITE HOUSE - SASSY DESTROYERS
12. CATHARINE RABELO - LIBERTES
13. JO TO GUYANA - SIXTY MINUTE
14. QUEEN - I WANT TO BREAK YOUR HEART
15. RUSH - CAWILL STRANGIATTE



# Reviews



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 By Henry Cowell  
**Blues With A Feeling: The Little Walter Story**  
 By Tony Glover, Scott Dirks & Ward Gaines  
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 Ghent, Belgium  
**Evan Parker & The Electro-Acoustic Ensemble**  
 Huddersfield, UK  
**Instal**  
 Glasgow, UK  
**Sun City Girls**  
 New York, USA  
**SF Jazz Festival**  
 San Francisco, USA

# Soundcheck

This month's selected CDs, vinyl and singles

Illustrating the establishment: 'Weirzy Peter' (left), 'Cousin Cousin' (center) and 'Genesis P-Orridge' (right) with 'Genesis P-Orridge' (right) and 'Genesis P-Orridge' (right).



## THROBBING GRISTLE TG24: 24 HOURS OF THROBBING GRISTLE

THE GRITTY AREA OF MUTE TGCD034 34XCD

This is one story that always begins in the same way: at the end. On 23 June 1981 a clutch of black-edged postcards were mailed out, each one bearing the same simple message in ornate, funeral script: "Throbbing Gristle: The Mission is Terminated". Admitting neither success nor failure, the last collective gesture made in public by the group's constituent members, Genesis P-Orridge, Peter Christopherson, Chris Carter and Cossey Fanni Tutti, gave away little more than the suggestion of some ambiguous snuffing out in a dank and hapless corner. The statement also carried within it unmistakable echoes of Colonel Kurtz, the rogue Green Beret officer from Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, and serial killer Peter Sutcliffe, better known to the British tabloids as the Yorkshire Ripper, both prominent TG contemporaries touched by similar destinies. As such, it was the perfect expression of a working method Throbbing Gristle had been developing since its inception in 1975: blurring myth and reality into baleful farragoes that took on form and substance precisely because they seemed under constant threat of annihilation. Freed from all compromise with the facts of existence, terminal moments make the best, only possible sense. Or to quote Iggy Pop, surveying the bloody conclusion of the last ever Stooges concert in Detroit at a time when the Throbbing Gristle mission was just beginning to shape itself: "I never thought it would come to this, baby."

Except that it was always going to come to this. Throbbing Gristle also founded Industrial Records (whose 25th anniversary this deluxe reissue celebrates), allowing them to control the availability not only of their own recorded material but that of such kindred spirits and co-conspirators as Clock DVA, Cabaret Voltaire and Monte Cazazza. It was an ambitious schedule, revealing a concern for preserving the most transitory and fragmented moments. One of Industrial's very last albums was, in fact, a compilation of early tape experiments conducted by William Burroughs, put out under the neatly prophetic title, *Nothing Here Now But The Recordings*, a fitting conclusion to an operation whose first release, TG's *Second Annual Report*, had included the soundtrack to an art house movie project called *After Cease To Exist*.

What linked the two, and everything that lay between, was the practice Genesis P-Orridge had inherited from his performance art days with Cossey Fanni Tutti in *Coun Transmissions*, of exhaustively documenting events. "The policy of TG to record every live disconcert," Gen explained in his liner notes for *Second Annual Report*'s reissue on CD in 1991, "was a leftover from the Art world when documentation was normally the only residual evidence of live works executed and thus essential for reference and accumulation of a measurable body



**22 years after terminating their mission to make war on capitalism and conformity, Throbbing Gristle have their day of infamy – literally: 24 hours' worth of music that lays bare their boom to bust Industrial cycle.**

**By Ken Hollings**

of work. It is worth noting that many of TG's later techniques and policies are far more logical and clear when viewed in this light."

And so we come to 24 Hours, a collection of 24 individual concert performances recorded between 1976 and 1980 originally available from Industrial Records by mail order as individual audio cassettes or a limited edition box set packaged in a small attaché case containing original artwork and supporting interviews. Each recording came in the same format: duplicated onto a Sony C60, the only brand at that time to have a completely transparent library case, bearing a catalogue number and a uniform grey cover design incorporating some suggestive or distinguishing cover image. At the time, cassettes were still being touted as the radical new industry format and, with the introduction of the personal stereo in the early 1980s, the TG live back catalogue made for the most perfect sensory disorientation. Jam one of these suckers into your Walkman, turn up the volume and then wander around town staring with wide-eyed, horrified wonder at the world as a war film. Better than drugs, it revealed the warped, churning psychodrama of TG's live sound to be less of a listening experience than a dense tactile environment in which to submerge yourself. "We also had a notion," Cossey explains in David Keenan's admirably succinct liner notes to the missed set, "that die-hard TGers would immerse themselves in TG for the full 24 hours."

The gesture constituted a finely calculated gamble on TG's part. To make so much material freely available ran the risk of exposing every slurred moment, every sleight of hand and imperfection. At the same time, however, the sheer weight of it withdraws the whole matter from debate, provoking two responses, both of which require a state of surrender or collapse in its presence. Faced with 24 relentless hours of TG performing live in your own home, it's tempting to dismiss the whole thing as unworthy of proper scrutiny or to consider the ability to endure it all as a small form of personal salvation. Either way you can end up reviewing strategy, which is often just another word for biography, rather than the work itself.

The continuity of these recordings brings with them a sense of veracity – something reflected by their transfer onto CD. In remastering the tapes, Chris Carter has maintained the original C60 format, meaning that nearly every disc contains exactly two tracks, the second of which will occasionally end in silence, representing the unused portion of the cassette. Each disc is uniformly packaged in a cardboard slipcase bearing only the name of the venue where the event took place and a catalogue number based on the one issued to it by Industrial Records. From this meticulous veiling of order with chaos emerge some sharply defined moments of focus, conflict and transcendence. To get some idea of just how highly charged a TG "disconnect" could be, try immersing yourself in the closing moments of their Brighton Polytechnic appearance on 26 March 1977. After the performance has collapsed into a shouting

match between the resident DJ and a largely hostile audience, a pungent exchange that was preserved at the conclusion of side one of the original vinyl version of *Second Annual Report*, Genesis makes his final comment: "If you'd rather listen to rhythm 'n' blues, rock 'n' roll, 12 bars, learn all the notes, you're quite welcome, but if I get a chance to shoot you in the guts later, I'll do it."

Thus spoke a member of the group Tony MP Sir Nicholas Fairbairn had been happy to denounce the previous year as "wreckers of civilisation". Although referring specifically to Coum Transmission's infamous Prostitution show at the ICA in the autumn of 1976, Fairbairn had inadvertently identified a key element of Throbbing Gristle's controversial appeal. Hardwired into the clanging tape loops, overloaded amps and heavily distorted pedal effects of their earliest concerts was an image of machines that, although deeply alienating, expressed a view of industrial degradation and collapse that was so easy to grasp that even a Tony MP could get it. This was the end of mechanical utopianism and all that it entailed. In this respect, "wrecking" as a public act had more to do with the industry than culture. It was a Luddite gesture, a clear moment of division between machine minders and machine breakers. Like rock 'n' roll itself, technological progress was revealed as an expensive fraud, another failed human endeavour to crowd the gloomy wasteland of dead dogs, refuse and psychopathic killers that Genesis describes in the opening moments of TG's ICA performance on 18 October 1976.

To comprehend just how rapidly TG was moving towards this defining moment, try comparing the meandering, rather subdued space rock of their Air Gallery concert, three months before the ICA event, and the burgeoning atrophy of their appearance at the Winchester Hat Fair a few weeks later. The structure of each piece is reduced to a series of impulses, stabs of noise, each one of erratic duration. Reverb, feedback and distortion give a far sharper tone than rock could provide at that time. Its message is consequently open to misinterpretation, both deliberate and unconscious. "Industrial music for industrial people" may have sounded like one of punk's more perceptive slogans, but the connection was only superficial and extremely shortlived. The data-corrupted glam rock of "Anarchy In The UK" is positively welcoming when set against the Brighton Polytechnic version of "Slug Bait", brought into devastating psychic proximity on *Second Annual Report* with a recording of "Maggot Death" from TG's Rat Club appearance on 22 May 1977.

Placed within the context of the original live performances, these fragments reveal themselves as part of a disturbing pop gnosticism that wilfully embraced the tawdry and the everyday: Tesco carrier bags blown across council runs, blood on the floor and Top Of The Pops TV documentaries leaking biochemical plagues onto the front room carpet, "Prince Philip fucking the Queen", Ian and Mym popping round for a cup of tea – very friendly. What

made it all work was a transparency of attitude, an open acceptance of material and its treatment that allowed a wide range of matter, often traditionally located outside the boundaries of taste and decency, to be brought forth on stage. The result was a kind of late Victorian séance in which the cables, wires and amplifiers became haunted by a disembodied vortex of voices telling tales of boredom, lust and death.

The text of "Hamburger Lady", taken from a letter reprinted in full on the cover of TG's OOA: *The Third And Final Report*, first slipped into consciousness at Goldsmith's College in May 1978, while the institutionalised ramblings of the compulsive metal swallower, complaining of the lavatory chain that has somehow wrapped itself around his spine, made an early bid for attention at Wakefield Industrial Training College a few weeks later. Both went on to become regular features in TG performances. By then, however, the relationship between their live and studio work had become more problematic. Whereas OOA was judiciously divided between the two, with a multi-track recording of "Hamburger Lady" helping to bring sharper definition to all subsequent onstage enactments of the piece, later releases threw this balance into question. The 20 Jazz Funk Greats album, for example, dumped the live element altogether, even though its versions of "Convincing People" and "What A Day" were pale reflections of their extended incarnations as presented at Derby's Ajanta Cinema and the Russell Club in Manchester during the spring of 1979.

Often opening with the coolly deliberated "Weapon Training" tape, TG's performances throughout the first six months of 1979 were among the strongest of their career, culminating in the Guild Hall Northampton show, where a blistering "Wall Of Noise" led into the electronic derision dance of "No Bones" and the mismerising "They Make No Say", both of which are deserving of a separate release. Performances beyond this point tended to comprise material that would ultimately become more familiar to those owning the *Heavenly Earth* album, opening live at industrial Records studio before an invited audience. This blurring of performance strategies does not, however, hide the fact that attitudes towards the use of technology, both within and the Throbbing Gristle constituency and without, were undergoing a radical change. Machines were integrating themselves into the live arena, with harmonisers, bass sequencers and increasingly sophisticated rhythm generators slowly taking over from their human operators.

As if to acknowledge this shift, one of the last CDs here, documenting a TG event at Butler's Wharf night at the end of 1979, features the rare insertion of a recognisable film clip, taken from John Carpenter's *Dark Star*, in which a hyper-intelligent nuclear device, convinced that it has become God, detonates itself with the words, "Let there be light". The slaves were now in danger of replacing their masters. In the mission's end was its beginning. It is hard, in retrospect, to imagine a more terminal moment. □

# Viewing the 21st century's drive towards self-destruction through the eyes of Edgar Allan Poe, Lou Reed's latest audio drama finds him irresistibly morphing into his favourite poet. By Matt fytche

Taking tales of mystery and the imagination: Lou Reed

## LOU REED THE RAVEN

REFRIGES 60652443792 2KCD

A number of scintillating morbid energies and the bad psychic debt of two centuries combined went into the making of Lou Reed's *The Raven*, it seems. Firstly, there was the collaboration with Brooklyn Academy of Music supranatural Robert Wilson that resulted in Poe in 2001 – an audiovisual performance based on the work of Edgar Allan Poe in the mould of Wilson's other experimental crossovers between rock and the 19th century, among them his 90s Reed collaboration *Time Rocker*. Then there were the unforeseen demons impacting on the American psyche in 2001. Reed considers Poe to be attuned to the spirit of the new century: "Obsessions, paranoia, weird acts of self-destruction surround us constantly."

And then there's Reed himself, who has nominated *The Raven* as the culmination of absolutely everything he's worked on. Offered the chance to bring Poe to life, he says he "surged towards it like a Rottweiler chasing a bloody bone". The project finally snowballed into this two-hour double CD extravaganza, complete with poems and spoken word skits, featuring actors Willem Dafoe, Steve Buscemi and Amanda Plummer, and passing contributions from Ornette Coleman, Laurie Anderson, David Bowie and The Blind Boys Of Alabama, as well as Reed's usual bandmates – bassist Fernando Saunders, guitarist Mike Rutledge and drummer Tony Smith.

If this sounds like a weird and overblown pomp rock musical, the opening finds Reed mercilessly stalling: "Lo, it's a gale night, a mystic throng bedecked," he intones, fawning off spectres of *The Rocky Horror Show* with his crazy, languorous cadence. A whooping guitar drone segues into a brassy rock fanfare, before a throbbing rock/gospel riff kicks off the album proper. Reed's hoarse declamations, matched by sassy responses from the brass section, promise decadence, poisonings, "hellish and odder", live burials and automatic eyes: "Boy, you won't need 3D glasses to pass beyond this door." You'd be justified for thinking that this is Poe via the Moulin Rouge at this point. Well, Charles Baudelaire and the Surrealists both claimed Poe as their own, while Wilson is intent on restaging the twistings of the European psyche as a high art spectator sport. Yet when Reed intones the refrain, "That's the stories of Edgar Allan Poe – not exactly the boy next door",

you know this journey will also be traced in Reed's own peculiar and unpredictable way. His songs, interspersed with dramatic dialogues and poetic recitations over hollow atmospheric effects, are more a phantasmagorical patchwork of Poe and Reed, an act of violent reanimation.

The title track, read by Dafoe over a suspended synth drone and slow weeping violins, shadows rather than reproduces Poe's original ballad, with Reed inserting faux Romantic exclamations such as "Of Woe!" like a man possessed by the Dead Poets Society. This is an Edgar Allan Poe who has fully absorbed Reed, who has himself absorbed Burroughs, Kerouac and Rimbaud like tablets of laudanum into his own psyche. Where Poe is normally full of nervy drolmouctions and overwrought aesthetic speculation, Reed starts free-associating notes of a more direct loathing: "Tell me what thy lordly name is, that you are not nightmare sewage, some dry powder drink or inhalation framed from flames of downtown lore."

At times, the metamorphosis becomes so complete that both appear to ventriloquise each other's world, with Poe's ailing neuroses becoming ciphers for Reed's own morbid anxieties as he faces the oval portrait of his career: "Music is a reflection of our inner self, unfettered agony touches the wayward string." That was Reed pretending to be Poe. "His long improvised dirges will ring for ever in my ears. Among other things I hold painfully in mind a certain singular perversion and amplification..." That, strangely enough, was Poe on Rodenck Usher. Whenever the clock of bombast falls, however, Reed emerges as the familiar downtown prophet of ennui and remembrance. *The Raven* is full of ballads of a gentler kind. His tender duet with Laurie Anderson, "Call On Me", could have come from his and John Cale's Werhol elegy, *Songs For Drella*. The refrain of the buzzer "Change" – "The only thing constantly changing is change/and its ways for the worse" – recalls the desperation of *Music And Loss*, as it introduces a grim, defiant comedy about body trauma in middle age: "Your ass does a sag/your balls shrivel up/your cock swallowed up in its sac."

But there's more in the pit of Reed's psyche than the pendulum of ageing. "Fire Music", a stolen glance back to Metal Machine Music, leaps from Amanda Plummer's vengeful scream "Burn monkeys burn" on the preceding track into a long explosion of scabrous dissonance and white noise. Recorded three days after

11 September, Reed feels it registered the impact and now stands as his response. Even so, when the album elsewhere points to "the chaos and the carnage that reside deep within me", the emphasis falls not on the bad news above ground but something worse inside. Guilt and the "Imp of Perverseness" – Poe's shorthand for an inexplicable drive towards self-destruction – become obsessive themes. Reed comments on how he has always been wrestling with the desire for self-mutilation: "To my mind Poe is father to William Burroughs and Hubert Selby. I am forever fitting their blood to my melodies." Backed by The Blind Boys Of Alabama, "I Wanna Know (The Pit And The Pendulum)" becomes a confessional pulp chant, with Reed gruffly spitting out "The paradoxical something which we make our pervasiveness". This core of self-torture is compounded by the harrying superego figures hammed up by Dafoe and Plummer, who screams about "your pathetic cock". And this now sexualised fear rewrites the Poe originals with a different kind of perversion. The raven of the poem starts "at my male sex" through the "haze of cocaine's glory"; and as Reed admits, you just know Poe did not write "sweaty dickless liar". But *The Raven* is a rewarding and self-consciously motley fest, noddled as much with quiet nostalgia or jokey Broadway glitz as with lewd, simmering barnum gutter, and it's Reed's saving grace that his self obsession starts from the premise of burlesque and works its way back to decadence, with passionate angst always cushioned by lesser intensity.

Hence he and the actors have a field day camping up the Gothic against a backdrop of radio play storms and creaking doors. David Bowie obliges with a crime-making cameo by singing "I'm A Hop Frog", while Ornette Coleman lends janky off-note curls and twists to Reed's more monolithic riff "Guilty". An affecting retake of Benji's "The Bed" with a chugging rhythm bowed on the cello, is followed, midway, by an amazing, slow rendition of "Perfect Day", sung by Current 93 protégé Antony, of Antony & The Johnsons. The force of the context has entirely transmuted Reed's anthem into a hushed, inverted spiritual, a melancholy jewel of a track, a queer, somnolent scar smouldering at the core of his melody of passion and fear. Its refrain is the one most likely to be heard echoing at the lattice of Poe's decaying mansion. □



**MASAMI AKITA & RUSSELL HASWELL  
SATANSTORMADE**  
WARP WARP0206 CD

**MERZBOW**  
24 HOURS: A DAY OF SEALS  
D RIVER OPRDM0203 48CD

**MERZBOW**  
IMPORTANT MPRR0204 CD

**MERZOW**  
OPPOSITE OPRD001 CD  
BY EDWIN FOUNCEY

Recent developments in the ever evolving and absorbing world of Masami Akita, aka Merzbow, point towards a deepening interest in guitar rock, together with an equally passionate obsession with the animal kingdom. For 24 Hours: A Day Of Seals, Akita has assembled shoeds of sampled electric guitar stum and the submerged calls from various species of seals, among other denizens of the deep, into a masterpiece of what she stands as his first real masterpiece since he upgraded to digital. Although the noise factor is omnipresent, he resists bludgeoning the listener with the usual set of computerized power tools and goes for an almost — in Merzbow terms — Ambient approach. This four CD set is akin to taking through an ice hole and being jettied along by an electric tidal current so cold and cutting that it all but sears the flesh. As you are drawn deeper into its rushing underworld, the other sounds filtering through it gradually induce a hallucinatory effect, as you peek out the winding, whooping and chattering of the whales, seals, penguins, porpoises and dolphins gliding through the frozen state. At one point, Akita drops a depth charge of a treated Metal guitar loop, which slowly sinks to the floor of Merzbow's ocean of sound, from where it sends back a distant ghostly response. To experience the full impact of Akita's Arctic soundscapes, 24Hr: AODS is best taken in at a single sitting.

Boasting a picture of a fire-breathing elephant seal suggests that Merzbow builds on the kind of treatments used on 24Hr: AODS. But its title is a more accurate indicator of its upbeat, demoralized friendly mood. Here Merzbow kicks in with a set of tracks you could almost hang along to. Its playful dissonance of drum infected dance beats, sliced wide open with sampled versions of noise then guitar riffing, is a valiant attempt to break on through to the other side. Merzbow digitally turns up the tropical heat explored on his earlier Frog LP in contrast with the waterworld of 24Hr: AODS, the land-based Merzbow is shaped from the claustrophobic chattering of seething insects, in the middle of which he unleashes a rampaging elephantine creature, crushing everything underfoot. Once again Merzbow imprints a vivid sound picture on the listener's imagination. Elsewhere he effectively summons up the creative spirit of Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki, while "Humming Bird" lays bare a tender side, almost, but Akita's Akita's supposedly unflinching means for mayhem. With UK noise musician cum art terrorist Russell Haswell on Satanstormade, however, Akita all but reverts to his analogue self during a pitched battle of the laptops that twists the pain threshold all the way up and stands well back. The duo's mutual affection for extreme Noise, Black/Death/Thrash Metal music is well known, and their potent version shows the Scandinavians how to kick up an unholy row

without picking up a guitar or torching a church. Beat heard at full volume in a darkened room, Satanstormade is an uppy yet totally thrilling express ride to Hell and back, with the devil lurking in the detail.

**CYRO BAPTISTA**  
BEAT THE DONKEY  
TZADIK TZAD006 CD

BY JOHN CRATCHLEY

Beat The Donkey is titled after Cuban percussionist Cyro Baptista's (long-serving working unit, which is built around his obvious love for and absorption of a plethora of percussion styles from around the globe. The 12 piece set-up plays an inexhaustible array of instruments, the weirder of them including a Coca-Cola bong, frog bells, vacuum cleaner hose, and the timeless Bektista, who's played with just about everybody from Medeski, Martin & Wood to John Zorn, calls in a host of favours to swell the ranks to 27 with guest appearances from, among others, Marc Ribot on guitar, John Zorn on alto, James Saff on keyboards and Erik Fredriksson on cello.

Of necessity, then, the eclectic percussionist must expend much of his indisputable energy in marshalling disparate forces if he's to achieve coherent results. If the resultant concoction never settles into a recognizable style, it leaves the listener transfixed by its percussive and idiosyncratic overload. In Portuguese, Beat The Donkey ("Pis Na Mula") translates as "let's go, let's do this", and Baptista is certainly intent on creating an anarchic rollercoaster ride through the album's 12 tracks. Live, an ensemble that happily links music, theatre, dance and martial arts would be a sensual feast, but on record this additional sensory reinforcement is largely unavailable. As a result, much of the group vocal work feels kitsch and unsubstantiated and the frequent moments of conscious "borrowing" from disparate styles, such as the Heavy Metal rip-off on "Caçapapo Estrela Brilhante", lose their "in-joke" quality.

**KITTY BRAZELTON**  
CHAMBER MUSIC FOR THE INNER EAR  
CHIVERSCHIVERS MUSIC 800 CD

BY ANDY HAMILTON

The Dutch has Total Football, and Kitty Brazelton has Total Music. There are no mixed styles and genres that she hasn't absorbed or embraced. Her 7th group Musica Three mixed medieval pastiche with free jazz and rock solo — fit to have heard now — while her 90s ensemble Hildegarde interpreted Hildegarde von Bingen. Her current project What Is It Like To Be A Bat? — at a guess named for a treatise by philosopher Thomas Nagel — is a "digital chamber punk band". Eclectic art's up to the job of containing the breadth of her creativity, hence Kyle Garris's term "totalist", or "21st century school music".

Consisting of pieces dating from the last decade, the disc's first work, Sonata For The Inner Ear, is a three-movement octet written for The California Ear Unit. Though they could have usefully dug in more in the heavily improvised second movement, I now regret that I once described them as The California Offbeat Unit. The Sonata is a "trypthy offering a bilateral view of a large acoustic instrumental group as it makes its way through the musical plankton or deep waters of two musical modes" — yeah, too: 'em the goldfish food, name.

If The Ear Unit is an alt-classical ensemble, The Manhattan Brass Quintet is made up of jazz players, which gives a definite edge to their interpretation of Come Spring. This piece is strangely reminiscent of Third Stream, the 50s jazz-classical fusion attempted by such as Gunther Schuller and George Russell, but with touches of Frank Zappa's Varnish Pie. Maybe Brazelton's husband, jazz writer and Wire contributor Howard Mandel, had some influence here. Shorter pieces include the more subdued, modernist work Sonar Como Uma Bomba (Largo for Chris Washburn's trombone and sampled soundscape. With Brazelton, not all the music is in the score, and it's good to hear jazz players bringing their special strengths to interpreting classical composition. You might wonder how someone's musical appetite can be quite so voracious, but the results are anarchic, wacky and hard to resist.

**JEFF BUCKLEY & GARY LUCAS**  
SONGS TO NO ONE 1991-1992  
GRUUS FL014 CD

BY TOM RIDGE

Assembled and produced by Hal Willner, these recordings document Jeff Buckley's early collaborations with guitarist Gary Lucas. Two songs, "Grace" and "Mystic Time", later featured on Buckley's 1994 album featuring Lucas's guitar parts, but here they appear in a very different context. As live soundboard duets between Buckley and Lucas, they possess a more fragile quality. With Buckley's vocals more muted in there, there's space for Lucas's mercurial guitar playing. A studio demo of "Grace" moves the song closer to its more familiar version, despite its initially jarring harmonica breaks, but they finally make sense in the context of the song's roots in Greenwich Village's folk-blues heritage.

"How Long Will It Take" and "Song To No One" are as ambitious as they are weird, and they're quirkier than anything Buckley went on to record. Featuring Lucas's solitary guitar accompaniment, these sparsely arranged songs get to the heart of their partnership. The live group recordings, with Lucas's group Gods And Monsters, are less convincing. "Chief" lacks a structure and "Mishie Fiebia (No Soul)" is the sort of thrashy rave-up that was no doubt given at NYC's Knitting Factory but doesn't look so hot the morning after. A few tracks were born posthumously fleshed out with musicians like Bill Frisell, who adds guitar to an inaudible "Sanctified Mind", while Sex Mob's horns row bolster the soulful "She Is Free", a precursor, sort of, to "Everybody Here Wants You", off Buckley's My Sweetheart The Drunk album.

Topping into Buckley's prehistory, Songs For No One captures some of his raw essence as a performer, while hinting at an alternative career path, rooted in Manhattan's downtown music scene, that was never realised. At the same time it reveals the emerging talent that Buckley himself intuitively honed to perfection. But on this evidence, Gary Lucas was a significant factor in Buckley's formative years.

**URI CAINE & CONCERTO KÖLN**  
DIABELLI VARIATIONS  
WRITERS & WITNES 01000 CD

BY TOM PERCHARD

Beethoven's Diabelli Variations were composed in response to a request from the music publisher Anton Diabelli, who had invited several

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**Stephen Robinson gushes over a spunky collection of jabbering cut-up vocal treatments by Oslo composer Maja Ratkje**

**MAJA RATKJE  
VOICE**

RUNE GRAMMOFON RCG02023 CD

Although *Voice* is the first solo album from 29-year-old Norwegian singer, composer and electronics player Maja Solveig Kjølstrøm Ratkje, it is a recording that emerges on the back of an already impressive CV. She lectures in composition at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, has had her own compositions performed in more than 30 countries, has contributed to recordings by Norwegian accordionist Frode Halseth and the duo Jazzkammer; has performed with, among others, No Spaghetti Edition with Evan Parker and Rhodri Davies, with Misami Akita, Zbigniew Karkowski, Sachiko M and The Oslo Sinfonietta. She is also a member of the Norwegian all-female improvising quartet Spunk!, who have released two albums and a remix collection on Rune Grammofon, as well as being one half of the electronics duo Fe-Mat with fellow Spunkette Hild Sofie Tafjord.

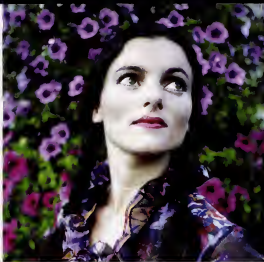
So while her background and training is evidently formal, it's clear from the above that Ratkje has an open ear for improvisation and a seemingly unquenchable thirst for performance in a variety of different contexts. None of that, however, can serve as preparation for the furious hissing and squealing insanity that at times rages tornado-like through this

album. All the training, discipline and precision that you might expect from her CV are here enlisted in the service, or possession, of forces that leave behind them a trail of finely crafted destruction that has you by turns stumped and stupefied, or laughing out loud and seriously concerned for her sanity. Anyone familiar with them might have partially anticipated what occurs on *Voice* from Ratkje's recordings with Spunk!, the unit that remains her primary focus: in the context of Spunk! it is her voice more than anything else that injects the sense of off-kilter wit that has pervaded their recordings. It's an edgy and perversely perplexing humour that continually wrongfoots the listener while at the same time throwing the inventiveness and subtly eccentric instrumentation into sharper relief. Appropriately enough, on *Voice* her extraordinary vocals become the sole focus of the proceedings. Stripped of the responsibility that comes with group improvisation, they explode into a vivid technicolour stream of jabbering, insane laughter and a clamour of schizoid ramblings, screeching and speaking in tongues that will leave more than a few synapses misfiring.

The album was conceived after a meeting between Ratkje and Jazzkammer's John Hegre and Lasse Marhaug (who co-produced it) at a workshop hosted by Orsmo Yashiki in Oslo in April 2000. The concept that emerged was to use Ratkje's voice as the sole sound source. Thus, her voice was recorded to a

variety of media (hard disk, dictaphone, samplers and midsic) and then stretched, sampled and treated, to the point where its acoustic origins are almost unrecognisable, into a series of rapid-fire edits, lush soundscapes, walls of noise or percussive constructions which then underpin a further series of "live" vocal performances. Of course, it is not always clear which is which, as the contorted density of layers and Ratkje's seemingly infinite variety of contorted vocalizations are in a process of continual mutation. Occasionally, the temptation to construct something faintly familiar takes hold; for example the glitch-heavy rhythm that scores deep furrows in the centre of "Trio". But even this resolves abruptly into a truly Merzbow-like cacophony of noise accompanying a torrent of wildly overdriven screaming, which is reproduced to even more terrifying effect on the closing "Insomnia".

For all its extremes, there are still moments that are direct and unmediated and curiously revelatory, and all the more so given that they are set within a context moved by a vitality, a force of life, that makes the album by turns both startling and affecting, warm and yet deeply warped. When singing out any one of these 11 tracks, you're left with the overwhelming sense that Ratkje's voice is gloriously possessed by the tongues of more split personalities than there are angels on the head of a pin. □



composers to contribute to a volume of contemporary Austrian music. Each composer was asked to provide a single variation on a trisyllabic theme that Diabelli himself had composed. Repeatedly offered both the idea of collaboration and the time rail, Beethoven slung together an entire set of 33 variations, each one teasing Diabelli's theme apart with a degree of cruelty. On Caine's approach might be much more effluviated, but in effect this CD continues his longrunning project to do for the old masters what Beethoven did for Diabelli.

Caine's piece follows Beethoven's formal scheme exactly, and indeed much of the music is common to both original and variant. The members of the Concordia Killie play material transcribed from the piano work and skillfully orchestrated in the Beethoven style. Meanwhile, Caine leads from an *Erard* fortepiano that he harnesses like a hawk-totter, embellishing and soloing over the orchestra's music. His solos are cast in several voices — Romantic piano virtuoso, bebop firebrand, stride strutter — and Caine's chameleonic quality sometimes reveals things about the music. In one variation, for example, Caine's playing highlights the different uses that Beethoven and Bud Powell made of the same harmonic material. But too often the polyphony is just tight. Overplayed, ironic blues licks drag down the middle, turning bouncy-bop funk drag.

That said, the music is far from successful in the few variations for solo piano. Here, the relationship between Beethoven's text and Caine's interpretation isn't so clearly defined, and thematic material is woven into real improvisation in a way that reveals Caine's art much better than the main body of the piece. Out of the composer's grip, he can turn the tables on Beethoven and joke at his expense: in the seventh variation, he turns motives from Diabelli's theme into quotations from the third and fifth symphonies, and it works. But it's hard to be sarcastic about a piece that's already about sarcasm, and elsewhere this incongruity just feels indulgent. It also misses the point. In Beethoven's version, the uniform and wrong is an important element in a scheme of transfiguration; after all the gags and the chromatic fugue, the last variation has the once tawdry theme disparaged, rewritten and transformed into "real art." For Caine, however, a non sequitur is a non sequitur — scheme or no scheme — and the piece ends with ironic jazz.

Now he has notched up Beethoven. Caine has appeared almost all the big Austro-German, and he would do well to leave behind this self-conscious dialogue between profound canon and breezy New World. If he'd just turn his invention and virtuosity on Chopin, the music might transcend the bewitch of old and new, past and present.

## [DIS]INTEGRAÇÃO PERMUTE

STIFF RECORD CO.

BY JULIAN GOWLEY

The Carlos Zingaro solo recording of magical, real time pieces for violin and electronics called *Cage Of Sand* was one of 2002's most rewarding releases. Permute derives all of its sound sources from that album. On 24 May 2002, at the Centre of Modern Art in Lisbon, Zingaro performed live mixing while six members of the Portuguese collective [Des]Integração used

laptop computers to process fragments from his recently completed work. In the course of these three transformations — lasting 31 minutes all together — his superbly evocative exposures are narrowed into busy little circuits of fizzing electronic motifs. In the foreground traces of the violin linger in waxy eddies and melodic creeks, while a bassloop takes shape in glazed droning and strident rumbles.

[Des]Integração was formed last January and is dedicated to exploring different ways of organising sounds. It follows that each of these pieces, named "Segment 1-3", shares a distinct family resemblance in terms of overall sound as a result of their recycling of the same basic materials. Samuel Beckett used to quote fellow novelist Robert Pinget's remark that nothing is ever said because it can always be said another way. There's similarly endless mileage in the [Des]Integração project, but with its deliberately restricted scope, Permute stands as an interesting gloss on *Cage Of Sand* more than a substitute for its fuller pleasures.

## DORINE MURAILLE MANI

PICTURE DISC PRODUCTIONS

BY OLIVIE RIGLI

Known for *Powderbox* features, those for whom the guitar and Supercollider software processing are killing music, Dorine Muraille shows that relentless digital dicing and reconstituting can still create subtle and highly musical results. Dorine, Muraille is a Frenchman in his 20s, real name Julien Lacquet. He records driving pianos, guitars, maybe a snooding jazz brass section, and subjects them to a *Fennex* or *Oval-type* deconstruction. Against this gaudy kaleidoscope of glitch, he mixes a privileged element, which is kept intact: the singing of French novelist Chloé Delaume, a string quartet, or an old recording of an English dialect folk song. These ancient English elements, a wistful "Barbara Allen", or a sweet feminine warbling ("We lay my love and I beneath the weeping willow"), so marvelously well attend the Roccoco digital underworld. They also beg the question: what is more distant from our lives — the "experimental" bubbling electronics, or the "familiar" but varnished bubble of unerring vocals.

Dorine, Muraille's music is heady and sweet. His gently hiccoughing samples, like Henry Purcell's microtonal percussion seen through a flicker-box, aim at a playful beauty. He enjoys sounds with borderline ambiguity: is that calm, vinyl surface noise, or both? An electronic sniffing dog? Sometimes he halts the flickering and focuses for a moment on a quiet piano chord progression — discreetly processed, of course. An intriguing, richly poetic piece of work.

## ARTHUR DOYLE ELECTRO- ACOUSTIC ENSEMBLE CONSPIRACY NATION

OSIRO OF LP

BY DAN WARRINGTON

Since its debut last year on *Estatic Void*, Arthur Doyle's Electro-Acoustic Ensemble has lost one bumper sticker, a letter 'C' and Jim O'Rourke's "deep mud vibe" — and it's all the better for it. With one half recorded in Buffalo (way back for Cereus howls) and the other in Rochester (mixed tight, Black Rag style), but then upstate New York, the album is pressed on muted blue

vinyl, with Thierry Ironbent's photo of Doyle staring mournfully out from the label. As to the music, *Conspiracy Nation* digs up Doyle's funky R&B notes and mashes them into the kind of potent hallucinogenic stew kids are warned to steer well clear of. You know you're in trouble from the first five minutes, as the airy, swirling and deliciously off-kilter drums set the stage for Doyle's denuded whooping and cackling. "Head A Pointhead" (which also incorporates part of "Mildred Graves") lays down a bed of distant jungle drumming for Doyle's duos to stretch out on. If he's all too brief stint with Sun Ra had ever been considered, pressed and left to gather moss for 30 years, it might have sounded like this. "Love Ship" slips into a half-speed Dark Magus groove, with Doyle yelling over Brother A-ha-style raves and an inspired sample of Nena's *Concert Ph.* Angus MacLennan's ghost beams down and jams along. The expert American Primitive was never more appropriate.

The 'punk' B-side comes roaring out of a blast of ambient club noise, Doyle yodelling insincerely over a Sly Stone nightmare claimants before the Gothic honor organ of *Vinny Perennas* sends him to the tenor for some inspired preaching. It's as if everything you ever loved about the 1970s has been chewed up, spit out and fired in one of Rochester's many high-tech shiners. Dave Cross, whose brilliant 11-*11* sampledisco is more in evidence here than in his predecessors, describes the group as the Axis of US underground. Well, one might blame the lack of anyone willing to engage with Doyle on a purely musical level, but when taking advantage of his cult widman status to let fly in all directions sounds as great as this, who's to complain?

## JOHN DUNCAN PHANTOM BROADCAST

ALL QUESTIONS AQ24 CD

BY JIM HAYNES

The shorthand radio spectrum is dappled with anomalous crackled repetitions, pulsed datagram and other synthetic transmissions of encrypted information. Far less sensational than the thoroughly disturbing phenomenon of numbers stations, these strange sounds are often related to its utility signals, because they may be used to transmit information from remote weather stations, specify GPS coordinates or communicate between air traffic controllers. Yet, without the proper equipment to translate and analyse these broadcasts, utility signals are unintelligible gurgles that leave their origin, inquest and meaning up to the listener's wild speculations.

Throughout his career, sound artist John Duncan has often manipulated shorthand radio broadcasts, especially these utility signals, in order to exacerbate the psychological condition that renders the unreadable other as alien, antagonistic, conspiratorial and haunted. However, his recent investigations into the chronicles of shorthand have taken a noticeable conceptual turn away from combinatorialism towards an electronic transcendentalism, where Duncan has replaced the fear of not knowing with the recognition of the potential for beauty to emerge from such sounds.

Duncan composed *Phantom Broadcast* from a single shorthand transmission, not giving any specific title as to its nature because they were neither clear nor relevant. As with all of his

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# The final recordings of John Fahey reveal a man at peace with both his past and his demons. By Peter Shapiro



Valdiction blues: John Fahey

## JOHN FAHEY

+  
REVERENT 104 CD

In *The Wire* 174, John Fahey said of his old records, "The things I wrote are kind of beautiful, but they also have these chord patterns and stuff that draw you down. I consider those songs kitsch, because they are a mixture of emotions. They contain no clear statements about anything, and now I find them disgusting... I was creating for myself an imaginary, beautiful world and pretending that I lived there, but I didn't feel beautiful. I was mad but I wasn't aware of it. I was also very sad, afraid and lonely. By presenting this so-called beautiful façade I looked good to myself and my audience."

Well, whatever he would have said about this, the last record he made before he died in February 2001 from complications arising from seductive bypass surgery, he would not, could not have called it "kitsch." There are no put-on airs and graces, no middle-headedness, and definitely no one is going to mistake this for Windham Hill. Fahey stares straight at the audience and the sheer import of his playing compels you to stare right back unblinkingly. Fahey's trademark fingerpicked guitar playing here is extraordinarily eerie, ghostly, at times even chilling, but never cheaply macabre. While certainly never known for his attack, his fingerpicking is almost naggingly slow and deliberate as he scratches out huge, whining, steel covers or sends bent notes gently cascading from the fretboard like rain trickling down a gutter after a storm. This isn't a "dark night of the soul" kind of journey, but some guy sitting on his back porch on a thick, humid night contemplating his own mortality, listening to the cicadas making their way through the kudzu by the swamp and finding

tranquility in the darkness.

Despite his apparent disowning of the old acoustic work that characterized his records prior to 1997's *City Of Refuge*, + is almost entirely acoustic, and the verve and weight with which he approaches these blues, drones and Tin Pan Alley compositions (even an Elizabethan madrigal crops up halfway through "Charles Bradley's Ten Sixty-Six Blues") indicates that Fahey finally made peace with his vision, his body of work and, hopefully, himself. The key track in this regard is the final one, "Untitled W/Rain", which finds Fahey jamming on an acoustic guitar along with a recording of a city street on a rainy night and an overtone-producing sustained organ note that manages to simultaneously evoke a silent movie Wurlitzer, Charlemagne Palestine and The Band's Garth Hudson (and maybe even the finale of *And The Mysticians* "96 Tears" - had it been a lock groove). As well as unringing nearly all the strands of his singular aesthetic, "Untitled W/Rain" is simply stunning on its own merit, with or without context: the blues stretched into a Buddhist sutra.

That sense of holiness continues on the equally remarkable "Red Cross, Disciple Of Christ. Today (For Guitars Roberts)". Guitars Roberts was the name Loren MazzaCane Connors used for his first recordings with Suzanne Langille, and "Red Cross..." certainly shares some of Connors's windswept bleakness. But unlike Connors, Fahey more than meets you halfway, as Arthur C Danto might say - the lingering, drone-like chords take a bite out of you rather than just hover above the heather - and the piece doesn't threaten to crumble in your hands if you approach it too closely. Of course, Fahey has always had that queesting tone (which is why the New Agers dug him), but on "Red Cross..." and on the gorgeous but almost too chaste

"Ananias" the spirituality is tempered by the gruesome realities of the here and now in a fashion similar to Max Beckmann's rendering of "The Descent From The Cross".

The line between the devil's music of the blues and the sanctified spirituals was always thin, and on + Fahey has found yet another way to make the very profane truly profound. The Gershwins!

"Summertime" has never been so moving or so "out there". The close miking here emphasises every thwack, every hoop that he forces the eternal maddy to jump through, and that guitar tone is so clearly enunciated it can't help but tug your heartstrings. His take on "Motherless Child", though, goes even further. From the icicle cascade at the beginning through the middle passage that sounds like he's wrenching the notes out of the fretboard to the climactic exorcism, this most classic of blues songs hasn't had such a powerful performance since Blind Willie Johnson's.

In his book of transcriptions, *The Best Of John Fahey*, he wrote, "The typical middle class interpreter of folk music makes his guitar sound like a metronome, without timbre changes and without percussive and loud-soft tone contrasts. He is a friendly guy. He likes everybody. He smiles a lot. He wants you to like him. The hell with him." + isn't an album made by a guy who wants you to like him, and in a perfect world it would consign that Kingston Trio shirt to Dante's Eighth Circle, but in the process of making the argument for "folk" music as a living, breathing thing as forcefully as any album ever has, Fahey has created music that is so vividly human, poignant, beautiful and, well if you look at it the right way, likeable that even the crystal-stroking folkies who bought his Christmas albums will enjoy it. □



Shartave explains, he has announced that he worked on Phantom Broadcast mostly through contextualisation rather than electronic signal processing (although some reverb and overpowering are evident). This is a little hard to believe when the album opens with a magnificent ringing that appears less as radio noise telegraphy and more as a heavy cloak of baritone vowels modulating between a small range of sustained notes behind an equally endless metallic bell tone. Over its 48 minutes, he unveils gradual shifts appearing as reverberating masses of air that elegantly rise and fall, with an occasional flicker around the edges. Phantom Broadcast should stand as one of Duncan's greatest pieces, rendered as a majestic reflection of the minimalist orchestral tributes found in Larch's *Los Angeles*.

As seen in his collaboration with the German contemporary music ensemble Zeiskirker, Duncan has speculated that his work may be shifting beyond the scope of electronic composition and towards choral productions. Judging from this successful transformation of shortwave signals, his future as a composer looks bright.

**BOB DYLAN**  
THE BOOTLEG SERIES VOL 5:  
LIVE 1975 THE ROLLING  
THUNDER REVUE  
COLUMBIA/LEGACY 5101465 2XCD

Bob Dylan's 1975 Rolling Thunder Revue has always had a mythic status. Dylan himself saw it as an extension of the tradition of the travelling hootenanny, taking small city theatres by storm with a series of elaborately choreographed guerrilla performances, each one announced just a few days in advance. The shambolic excitement and spontaneity of the revue's ragtaggish troupe aside, for his fans its mythic status has been to do with the fact that it was Dylan heading at that point. In 1975 he was once again channeling the manic creative energies that had fuelled his insanely accelerated years of 1965 and '66. He had just released *Blood On The Tracks*, which stands as one of his greatest, not to mention most unguarded albums, emotionally speaking. And before the year was out he had already cut a successor, *Desire*, at an infamously chaotic but finally magical studio session over a whole new blueprint. Thoroughly inspired by these experiences, Dylan was torn to 'sell out' to America and get serious and do what it is that I do'. He has barely stopped since.

Originally, the movie format was conceived as a movable feast reconfigured nightly from Dylan's traveling players plus guests picked up en route. Out to regenerate the riots and communality of early 60s Greenwich Village, the revue reunited him with Joan Baez for the first time since she famously walked out on his 1965 tour, as well as Roger McGuinn, Ramblin' Jack Elliot, Bob Neuwert and Allen Ginsberg. Ironically the revue's most important members, Dylan's voice aides, were electric violenter Scarlet Rivera, glam guitarist Mick Ronson and multi-instrumentalist Jimi Hendrix. The season's tough, dryer sound suited Hendrix' bluesy, bluesy rock. The 1966 springboard for the spun steel voice, Dylan had evaled to navigate both the narrative complexities of Jimi's desire material, and a

songbook returned to a state of flux by their creator's restless, often powerful rephrasings. Meanwhile, Rivera's violin, coupled with Mansfield's Country steel, brings up the music's roots, itinerant qualities, tracking its migratory routes down the neglected and forgotten roads of America. Indeed, Dylan's performances, compiled from several concerts, remain unmatched outside of his 1996 "Judas" tour.

The opening "Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You" is an unexpected jewel, born from 1963's *Nashville Skyline* in tangents of film with Dylan's euphoric vocal beating the mythic section to the refrain, only for them to drop like misfired bombs seconds behind him. Adding topical urgency to the revue is Dylan being lined up by the plight of boxer Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, framed for a triple murder in 1966, to campaign for his release through his protest song "Hurricane" and the Night of the Hurricane fundraiser at Madison Square Garden that completed Rubin's third last leg. Given its most contentious political overtones here, Dylan's "The Times They Are a-Changin'" is a scolding, shot in a field of staccato spit out as fast as it shows the backing vocals out of step. Although the highlights are mostly electric, Dylan delivers beautiful solo readings of "It's All Over Now Baby Blue" and "Love Minus Zero/No Limit," along with the bulk of *Blood on the Tracks*.

My only gripe is how great it would have been had Columbia included snatches of the other songs involved, if only as a reminder that Dylan originally envisaged *Rolling Thunder* as a multi-artist revue that sometimes ran to four hours. As it is, a couple of duets with Booz party round out the picture. Still, when the opening chords of "Isis" ring out so gloriously, any notion of historical fidelity is effectively out the window.

**SIMON H FELL**  
KALEIDOZYKLEN  
BRUCE'S FINGERS BFA4 CD

**HESSION/WHARF/FELL**  
IMPROVABLY  
BRUCE'S FINGERS BFA4 CD

**JO FELL**  
IMPROVISERS 1988-1998  
BRUCE'S FINGERS SP42 PDK  
BY JULIAN COWLEY

There are few musicians with ambition equal to that of Simon Ratt. His determination to externalise sounds that crowd his mind's ear has resulted in some exhilarating, challenging, and at times, awe-inspiring recordings. He has, in earlier pieces, notably *Companion No. 57*, an ingeniously engineered spectacular superaphone and momentous collections of disparate soundworlds. He loves the sonorities of post-Wobesonian serialism, unapologetic discordance and underlying mass that veers between extremes of register. And he loves the unpredictable, toasting on the brink of energies of free improvisation. These are two musical realms inherent in Kaleidoskopien, subtitled *Companion No. 57* for unworldly double-bass, cello, organ & orchestra.

In his sleeveless Fell explains that he was after something like the "messy heterophony" of Charles Mingus, Sun Ra and Gil Evans. He also pushes the piece's frame of reference back through Varèse, Ives and Stravinsky to Mahler, whose *Fifth Symphony's* "Adagietto" is widely present in the fourth movement of Kaleidazkyien. Fell himself takes the solo improvising role

throughout, pitching his bass tirelessly and sometimes ferociously against the bristling ranks of the LSTwo Ensemble, a contemporary music group from the University of Leeds conducted by Simon Barnes, with five assistant conductors to support him through the music's most complex and demanding passages.

While thinking big, Fell seeks out playing situations that keep his feet firmly planted on the ground. Improbably presents an April 2000 reunion of his grizzly trio with reedsman Charles Wharf and excellent drummer Paul Hession. It's an hour-long tussle conducted "in a windowless, acoustically unremitting, dark, damp and smelly room on a small trading estate just north of the A505". The recording quality is actually fine and the music makes its appeals forcefully. Wharf coils out serpentine lines laced with venom while Hession pummels and tumbles. Fell on double bass has deep feeling for tough free playing.

Ja Fell's 31-page book of photographs is a welcome addition to the catalogue. As Derek Bailey notes in his foreword, its selection of musicians is "distinctly non-metropolitan" and her style is "nicely idiosyncratic." She favours a non-intrusive approach when tracking down these shadowy figures found, she says, "skulking in semi-darkness." The results can be pleasingly oblique. They can also make subtle reminders, as in the alignment of hand and ear that frames guitarist John Russell's introspection, or her visible image of liner Watts playing alto at a memorial service for John Stevens.

**MICHAEL FINNISSY**  
ETCHED BRIGHT WITH  
SUNLIGHT  
METRONOME MET1086 CD

**LOST LANDS**  
METIER MSVC020050 CD  
BY PHILIP CLARK

The last time I heard Michael Finnissy's *Elohed* bright with sunlight was during the premiere of the composer's mammoth five and half hour piano cycle *The History Of Photography in Sound* (reviewed in *The Wire* 2015). In that context, *Elohed* bristled hurtled past as a brilliant enigma. Its ingredients were both together the strands of the previous five but also *entirely* its stand alone reveals that the piece is as illuminated in a level of detail as the rest of the cycle, and has spectacular internal motifs. The pianist for that momentous premiere was Ian Pace, but here it's another Finnissy devotee, Nicolas Hodges, who tackles the physical and intellectual challenges of Finnissy's writing. Hodges pairs *Elohed* bricht with another piece from the *History*, *Ally-Paganini*, and plays the two works in contrast. The earlier piece is a more direct, more free Section and a *Werk* transcription; the contrast

Finniss explains *History Of Photography In Sound* as a treatise on the impact that photography and cinema have had on his music; and on 20th century thinking. He found the phrase "Etched bright with sunlight" in Derek Jarman's unfinished screenplay *Sod 'Em* and commenced it for the finale of his cycle. Jarman's words, he says, poetically encapsulated the technical process of photography. Throughout the cycle, Finniss freezes references from a typically varied range of sources (everything from blues, to Mozart and to Xenakis) as "sound photographs", and propels the music forward through dialectical clashes and unlikely cultural

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**JOHN SCHULLER**  
**LESSER ANGEL OF FAILURE**  
 WORLD MISERY RECORDINGS WMR001 CD

The striking pictorial cover of *Lesser Angel Of Failure* uses an illustration of Holman Hunt's painting *The Scapegoat*. That popular item of Victoriana had a particular story to tell, but this release from World Misery is strikingly short on polemical detail. We're left with a goat – half shaggy dog, half chocolate box mascot – in a psychedelic wasteland, and the general gist of sadness evidenced by the short bleak trail of the WMR back catalogue: 01/2000, *World Misery I*; 10/000 Years Is Like A Minute To God... 04/2000, *World Misery IV: I Am My Worst Enemy*, and so on. All of them solo recordings of John Schuller on a mix of electric and acoustic guitars, keyboards and radio; all of them pressed in limited editions of 20. They amount to a kind of apocryphal no-hoper codex, a semi-private testimony to the most lugubrious post-millennium depression since January 1000.

*Lesser Angel Of Failure*, the first in a new phase of public releases for WMR, represents an abrupt change in critical momentum for the label and for Schuller. The turn sees him teaming up with a loose knit posse of Seattle-based musicians, unpleasantly dubbed The Master Musicians Of Bukkake, and including the avant bowing of Eyvind Kang's viola: the goat is not alone. "Another Hanging" opens the celebration with a silted, hollow slide into morbidity. Henry Soranton's piano tinkles slowly but intently like a musical box unwinding in a 70s thriller flick. She's shadowed by Schuller's softly burning touch on the electric guitar, the two of them prouetting in the howling, cavernous darkness like flickering torches. Somebody somewhere is baying for blood while Eyvind Kang coaxes pensive bat shrieks from his viola. The following "Electric Candyland" eases the sound towards a pile-driving bluster – Schuller this

time on guitars and bathtub – while Randall Dunn supplies the electronic processing to create a mash of Hendrix and Merzbow: an overdriven pulsating wall moulded by sparser stutters of electronic shoring. The effect is like gulls shrieking inside an empty water cistern. So far, so Gothic/Industrial.

It's only with the title track that the rationale of World Misery and its Master Musicians starts to unfold. For what transpires is a deranged faux globalism, a large ensemble massacre of World Music devotion, to be replaced by a vibrant, billowing, outsider music. Call it: World Misery. "Lesser Angel Of Failure" sounds like a pastiche of classical Hawaiian singing performed by Keji Hano. With John Schuller lending support on the record player, Brad Mowen invents these pinched and whining vocals, like a childish parody of a Japanese musical. It's so obviously grating that annoyance becomes part of its aesthetic purpose – a kind of anti-crooning. Peel away the airbrushed cross-fertilisations and celebratory syntheses of a decade of World Music to find blistering silhouettes of incomprehension worked and whorled under the skin – a negative tattoo of international contact; communication's shadow.

For "Vanilla Sulf", the Master Musicians approach the sound of a multiple one man band – thumping, boingy bass drum and plinking, loose strangled zithers. I imagine them ambulating round in an anti-trance, despairing not towards transport but numbity. Even the *Bauts Of Bengal* don't approach this level of outsiderdom. With "Civil War Bukkake", the lesser angel looks homeward in a staged Library of Congress recording (it was cheered to see WFMU radio station in New Jersey has been playing this track alongside Fred McDowell's "Shake 'Em On Down"). A rattle taggle army of peeps, hollers, fiddlers and bass drum bangers march their way onto the set of a Spaghetti Western harping enthusiastically on a simple seven

note riff. When the main gang recedes, the interlinked guitars of Schuller and Bill Horst are left twining their out-rock garlands à la Captain Beefheart.

"Super Density Song" continues with a cross between *The Dirty Three* and Haino's hungry ghost music in Nijumui, the improvised scrape and wheedle of Kang's viola sounding like an orchestra of howling coyotes. "Kweekamae Mao" adds a Casio-lite rhythm to choreograph an argument between a samurai and a deranged ghesha. This really is Beefheart (with overtones of Damo Suzuki) let loose to overdub a late night Japanese sword and sorcery cartoon – swamp madness infesting the waters formerly reserved for hipHop. A far cry from David Toop's manifestos for Ambient cultural drift, this music sounds like an attempt to spit out world culture, to regain a kind of expressive outsider primitivism.

And yet, here's the ironic rub: they've fed on, absorbed so much from postmodernity's ethnic trade winds, that their soulful insides are nothing more than a mish-mash of other spiritual domiciles. The moment the world misercordians come together for a stomp at the border of Pöhlö city, they find this faux global music coming out: they gibber in Sufi, they complin in obscure Japanese rites, they gnash their teeth in Bodoulin (see "Camel Dragged To Death"). Seattle becomes no place but this hazy stream of cultural dissonance, bundled up into ad hoc jamborees and funeral rites, and outminuting in "Bulimian Rhapsody", a regurgitation of Central European emotional zest in a trade of tables, zithers and percussion which ascends towards a cacophonous vocal ululation. The lesser angels of failure take to the sky like a swarm of locusts; but the plague city seems to be everywhere and nowhere. The more they sick it up, the more it sticks to them with a gutsy, swaggering outsider aplomb. □

His own worst enemy: John Schuller

**If misery loves company, John Schuller and his posse of Seattle outsider musicians have a funny way of making friends with their artful equations of World Music and the world's woes. By Matt fytche**



combinations. Etched ought makes a journey from Bach, via Wagner to the low scene from Berlioz's *Romeo Et Juliette*, referenced in an earlier transcription, *Romeo And Juliet Are Drowning*. This material is interwoven with allusions to hymnody and folk music, but don't expect irresponsible postmodernism. Finnsjö avoids literal quotation, preferring to permeate his references with the strength of his compositional personality. This allows him to temporarily "own" the material rather than merely "borrow" it, and he transforms his sources into fluid and pleasurable material.

Ian Pace and Nicola Hedges have arrived at radically opposed viewpoints about Michael Finnsjö's piano music. This is a somewhat reckless generalisation, but Pace's tendency has been to emphasise its disjuncts and the Toyah Horse strategies the composer has devised to subvert dramatic pianism. Hedges's approach is cooler and less demeaning. He extracts the most plastic inclinations of Finnsjö's writing and plays the text more literally. As the composer has worked closely with Pace and Hedges, we can assume that both approaches are valid.

Nevertheless, comparing Hedges's version of Finnsjö's 1972 *Soundtrif* to this new recording, with the performance Pace released on Meyer last year (reviewed in *The Wire* 217) gives an indication of how fundamentally polarised their approaches are. Finnsjö claims *Soundtrif* as his first extended piano piece not to be derived from an existing source, suggesting its structure stems from the processes of film editing. Pace's performance is wilfully tough, with sudden explosive clashes disrupting its more liquid moments with unsettling force. Hedges builds more of a continuum, incorporating Finnsjö's intrusions on the whole with unflappable ease. The two pianists bring a more useful approach to the text of Finnsjö's *Verk* transcriptions, both of them swept along by the potency and lyrical mettle of its transformations.

Finnsjö's observation that *Lost Lands* – the latest from Finnsjö's series – "variously collects together the detritus of musical cultures potentially obliterated by ethnic cleansing (in Kurdistan and Azerbaijan), or styles and genres (Expressionism, Free Jazz) dismissed as obsolete or commercially unsustainable" could also cast as the rationale behind the history of *Photography in Sound* (1982) and *Delat* (1984) – both for abuse and persecution – and *Kulinen Olave* (1989) for soprano saxophone and percussion drew on Islamic or Arabic sources, while *Moon's glow* (1980) and *Rummi's Writ* (1978) drew a trajectory between Sidney Bechet and the genre that John Coltrane let out of the bag with *Axiom*. The obsession in these pieces is to "take" on manuscript paper the spontaneity and heat of music that only comes alive during real-time performance. These performances by ablist Chris Regearte and saxophonist Andrew McNeil are ebullient and joyous, using Finnsjö's text to penetrate performance practices that aren't their own. *Lost Lands* itself is from 1977 (making it a near contemporary of Finnsjö's classical English Country Tunes) and here the composer is at his most idiosyncratic and opaque. Scored for the odd combination of soprano saxophone, violin, guitar, piano and the shift E Flute clarinet, the piece builds from staccato fragments into a bit accelerating arc that moves so slowly it's impossible to gauge its progress. The music

manages to be totally disorienting as it compels you further into its web – pulling off such a contradiction is no mean feat.

## GRATEFUL DEAD DICK'S PICKS 26

GRATEFUL DEAD GOODCD4048 2XCD

## TOM CONSTANTEN 88 KEYS TO TOMORROW

GAFF MUSIC GAFF 0511 CD

BY EDWIN POUNCEY

The Grateful Dead's often quoted "long strange trip" through time and space, as chronicled in the *Dick's Picks* live series, rarely fails to surprise or delight, the odd dud notwithstanding. Volume 26 reverts to April 1969 for concerts in Chicago's Electric Theater and the Labor Temple, Minneapolis.

1969 was a vintage year for the group, as these recordings confirm. The Dead were riding high with their third album *Axiom* under their belt, songs from which make up the bulk of this set. Performing the complex

acoustic/electric rock arrangements that rumble through *Axiom* live was no mean feat. In addition, the clarity of these recordings (by acid alchemist Owsley Stanley) gives those new to The Dead an opportunity to actually make out the pristine psychedelic surrealism of songwriter Robert Hunter's lyrics, as Weir and Garcia (in live voice for once) laudate in the poetry of such songs as "Mountains Of The Moon", "China Cat Sunflower" and "St. Stephen". Dead two begins with a wrinkle regarding the "Dark Star" that simmers slowly under the hiss heat of Garcia's flickering guitar work, before blowing off and blowing a hole in the venue's ceiling. The other ingredient making this version rock is keyboard player Tom Constanten, whose energetic and exuberant organ grinding provides the perfect launching pad for Garcia's quackier strangled music.

Constanten left The Dead in 1970 to pursue a highly personal version through the session work, concert performances and theatre compositions that comprises his musical activity. *88 Keys To Tomorrow* is a rare chance to track Constanten's trajectory since his departure from The Dead. Here he performs a rich mixture of live and studio recordings that range over classical, reggae, psychedelia – he covers Donovan's "Fat Angel" (which Jefferson Airplane adopted as their theme song) – and a couple of Dead numbers. The standout is his masterful interpretation of "Dark Star", which grabs the original by its comet tail and sends it shooting off into another dimension. During his two years with The Dead, Constanten was key to the group exceeding their psychedelic trip into electronic composition. The recent "Electronic Study #9" is not as impressive as his early work, but he's still an experimental force to be reckoned with.

## ERKKI KURENNIEMI RECORDINGS 1963-1973

LOVE-SMITH LOST CD

BY STEPHEN ROBERTSON

On paper, Finnish digital music pioneer Erkki Kurenniemi already looks like the perfectly realised incarnation of a retro-futurist fantasy. For one, he's all self-unleashed, despite his visionary/inventor/retro-coated engineer/buffin credentials. Kurenniemi was the creator of the world's first commercially marketed micro-

computer and designer of the first ever digital synthesiser. But what really stokes the retro-futurist's campaign for his sainthood is the armoury of improbably named electronic instruments he invented: the Andromatic, the Sähkökavertti (Electronic Quartet), the DIM-A (Digital Music Instrument, Associative Memory) DIM-E and the DIM-D (Digital Input, which converted camera-replayed video images into electronic soundscape).

From some 3D recordings discovered in a vault, aptly described by the composer as "new equipment tests", Finnish label Love Records have compiled an impressive 11 track dossier that loudly argues his case. Viewed from a historical perspective, his music foretold digital directions in rhythm, noise and jumpcut editing, only back then no one was listening.

To demonstrate the capabilities of the Sähkökavertti dance machine, for instance, on "Sounds Of An Electronic Instrument #1" (1971), Kurenniemi constructs a maddeningly insistent rhythmic track which places the percussive joys of the digital glitch, here splicing its way with unerring precision through a relentless bass drum off-beat, squarely at the birth of digital music technology. Indeed, he had introduced the glitch even earlier, in less-than pristine, more warped 1968 track "Antidipaladi Tanssi (Dance Of The Antidipaladi)", composed as the "music that alters in some faraway galaxy might dance too". And just to get things going, he cuts in at a vaporous pace from a 4-d soundscape.

More surprising, however, is Kurenniemi's penchant for noise. The unadorned, highly abrasive drive of 1971's "Äänisäntien Äänä #4" (Sounds Of An Electronic Instrument #4) forcefully opens this set with its demonstration of the Sähkökavertti's earth-toned voice machine, on which Kurenniemi lets loose his preference for square waves over the pure sinewaves generally favoured by electronic experimentalists. This alone scarcely explains the near rock 'n' roll delight he derives from pulsating levels of noise, which peaks with the 15 minute glitfist of 1963's "On-Off", also the disc's earliest track. Recorded in real time with no montage tricks, it's comprised of a shifting series of searing acoustic feedback derived from the manual manipulation of reel-to-reel tape.

Finally, the abrupt editing of rhythm and sequence tracks, spliced with voices, radio broadcasts and the drone of found sounds and canned music returns you to the question of the music's presence. Immediately conceived and hugely enjoyable, this set restores Kurenniemi's vision to the era for which it was intended. While the man himself has declared that yesterday "is not what it used to be", recordings 1963-1973 leaves you with the feeling that the present bears an uncanny resemblance to futures past.

## GIDEON LEWENSOHN ODRADEK

ECM NEW SERIES 4619622 CD

BY ANDY HAMILTON

Odradek is made up entirely of first recordings by Israeli composer Gideon Lewensohn. Born in Jerusalem in 1954, and still living there, Lewensohn has rejected the demands of high modernism without being easily categorised as a postmodernist. The movements of the Piano Quartet, performed here by the Aynur Quartet and Alexander Lasevich, are named in homage



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## Soundcheck

to György Kurtág, George Rochberg, The Hilliard Ensemble and his brother Miklós, the Ondodek Quartet, meanwhile, is dedicated to ECM founder Manfred Eicher, and one of the brief movements even gets in a mention of his eleven-year-old son Raymond Menelle. Perhaps he's a little too generous with his dedications and tributes, which he has in a collected glory too easily won.

The Kurtág connection comes out in the miniature movements of the title composition for string quartet — yet it still adds up to a more substantive edifice than anything the Hungarian master attempted until late in his career. More importantly, it's saturated in a very un-Kurtág-like expressiveness. Indeed, the latter is a dominant note throughout, even if it takes a number of listens to disentangle the various emotional registers. Aptly enough, Ondodek is the name of an enigmatic character in a Kafka tale. Yet Lewerschoon is no postmodern magpie, he works within his chosen total limits. Always well made, the results are never less than interesting.

### LO-HI SAY IT MORE TIGER STRIP 1991 CD BY FELIX CEMBALL

This second album from former members of New York's Bass Hugg and Speedball Baby brims with short songs betraying influences ranging from 60s re-issues through 60s NYC art rock to today's Detroit garage scene. Lo-Hi are fronted by former drummer Hollis Queen, whose vocals hover between Kate Bush and the deadpan promiscuity of Debbie Harry, albeit over a safety net of Protolite effects. Their intention is to create music that's as cute as it is heavy with testosterone. On the positively authentic "Dn Thru", they realize the ambition with a balance of burlesque sleaze guitars and seductive, poetic lyrics. On "Lucy", they overdo the bubblegum vibes with extra handclaps and "Too In La's". Elsewhere, they temper brash lyrics such as "I wanna sleep around" with more conversationally open pop sentiments to create an artful yet charming

naivety that stops just short of kooky: "I'd like you, I promise I won't let you this time."

Sadly, they can't sustain the balance to the end. At times unbearably bland, their coyest can easily fade. However, the title track recalls The Clash in secondary mood, resonant with Jon Spencer's ear for a hook, and its cartoonish joy de vivre makes you feel cheerful for noticing its shortcomings.

### LOOSE FUR LOOSE FUR DRAG CITY 2003 CD BY CHRISTOPHER COX

Two years ago, Jim O'Rourke began collaborating with alt-country heroes (and fellow klunkers) Wilco. The quintet's Jeff Tweedy and Glenn Kotche backed O'Rourke on insignificant, the latest and hardest rockin' of his Otag. City/Denmore releases; and, in return, O'Rourke lent his skills as an arranger and mixer to Wilco's Yankee Hotel Foxtrot, setting the group's Country

rock adrift in a bath of horns, strings, electronics and concrete noise. O'Rourke's vanguard sensibilities no doubt contributed to Wilco's rift with their patron, Warner Brothers, who refused to release the record, leading the quintet to release it online before taking up with Nonesuch — ironically, a leftfield subsidiary of Warner Brothers, owner of an alarming quantity of the world's media.

On Loose Fur, the collaboration continues, the time as a full-fledged partnership, with O'Rourke and Tweedy sharing the lyric credits and, along with Kotche, jointly composing the music. One might have expected the trio, free from multitracked surveillance, to push further along the path charted by Yankee Hotel Foxtrot, producing some delicious collage of the acoustic, electric and cybernetic. Instead, Loose Fur turns out to be a pleasant if somewhat plain folk-rock record, less adventurous than either Wilco or O'Rourke's own recent outings. Where the latter were finely crafted and impeccably

## Size Matters

### 3", 7", 10" and other misshapes

Sydney, Australia's **Oren Ambarchi** wears lots of different, feathery hats. He plays destructo free rock with The Menstruation Sisters and he records on his own in both purely electronic and purely guitar-oriented formats. His work in all three areas sounds pretty great, and his new one, *Der Kleine König (Für Helmut Dörmig/Linka)* (Rinoshed 0117 7), represents an alignment of these stellar threads. The record is a set of two instrumental pieces that sound as though they were created via electric guitar, then allowed to expand and slither through the air more like his electronic stuff (albeit a bassless version). Abstract, amped frequencies, a bit like Marco Ferreri's work in pieces, this is a fine addition to the Rinoshed catalogue.

It's a bit weird to try and figure out what the device is up with a new record entitled *The Sounds Of Japanese Cosmology Cuts* (Fairways NO NUMBER 7); it purports to be two tones, "Lead Deeds's Counting Song" and "Sonshi's March", written and performed by **Shiko Asahara**, the leader of Japan's Aum Shin Riyo group. An extensive entry in an accompanying book gives a fairly straightforward account of Asahara and the cult following he collected. The booklet's a good read, although my interest in the workings of this kind of thing is not what it used to be. The music, however, is not at all that much objective interest. One tune has the sorta epic schnitz quality associated with theme songs from samurai films; the other has the kind rhythm and bell-tolled arrangement that make it resonate like something to be played on a Japanese morning kids' show. It's not very impressive sonically, but the package does offer a certain appeal that extends beyond music.

Chrispell Kereke continues to sneak out recordings in various formats. Like many other New Zealanders he's besotted by the CD-R

format, which can be something of an aesthetic liability, but thankfully he gets out the odd thing using a "higher" format. The latest offering along these lines is **Bleiville Cat Motel's** *Crestfallen/Winters Cocking Glory* (Killer 008 7). Like much of Bleiville's work, the two tunes here are very different, extremely inventive approaches to the drone. "Crestfallen" uses organ-line lines of electric guitar and organ to brighten the horizon; "Winters" combines temple bells, roughly handled violin strings, and the pulse of the planet to lift the veil of seasonal defenses. It sounds great played as a looped soundtrack for those Wicker Man port videos that are making the rounds. So you might wanna try it.

At Perry, a ceaseless booster of the Adzone underground, send a copy of **The Blacks' Last EP** (Chemical Valley HUNG-HU 7") with a cryptic note about the group's leader, Chad Kerr, dying on tour under mysterious circumstances. Well, be that as it may, the Blacks were a fine post-core punk trio and this is their farewell record. There is little new ground to be covered inside the hardcore form, but this record has none of the namby-pamby pop-like motion that has negated interest in so much recent punk rock. Kerr's vocals have a great roaring edge, a bit similar to Amsephen's Jeff Clayton, but perhaps less blood-garaging. The instrumental part is a nicely handled work of feedback-stained chaos that is allowed to toter into sheer freedom at times. A single like this — powerful, non-generic and full of uncontrollable anger — demonstrates that the hardcore genre only seems played out because so many of its proponents are uninterested. Approached by inventive artists, unleashed in the terms of commercial success, the stuff still has life in it.

**Little Wings** is the name that Portland, Oregon's Kyle Rydelski uses to record many of his

records. The "group" can be one person, or two, or more. On the new Little Wings record, *What Wonder* (KIP106 2037), Field's gentle acoustic guitar and vocals are accompanied by two different, developmentally disabled artists, he played with in California. The first of the collaborations features the standing, wordless vokalese of Barbie Wilkins; the second highlights the guitar work of Nancy Mullis. Both of these players have very particular and functionally unique approaches to their musical attack, and Field embraces these with a very deft touch. His solo work here is a bit more standard, consisting of sweet natural singer-songwriterism with some dynamic similarities to Wil Clayton's more orderly solo slabs.

At Roxyganza (Killer 008 7") is (I think) the first single released by **Original Arkitektika**, a great, multifaceted Polish collective. The musical wing of the organisation produces a type of folk rock with a very dark, primitive and force-like ambience. The two tracks here actually put me in mind of Ege Bamyasi-era Can at their most abstract. The percussion pulses like a hint of some eternal heartbeat just over the horizon; the other instruments shimmer into sight then fade away slowly; the vocals emerge from the pillow of dreams (or not at all). This is a gorgeous effort and probably more of a testament to the continued value of organic hallucinations than anyone would care to admit.

One of the greatest, most fantastically scabby 45s of the 60s was **Rats Revenge** Pts 1 & 2 by **The Rats**, originally recovered on the first volume of Tim Warren's legendary *Back From The Grave* series, the 1963 single has now been resorted by those sweet and loving cats at Norton Records (Norton 45840 7"). Over a gummy and simplistic repurgiation of the "Farmer John" hit, these insouciant teens from Akron, Ohio created the oral equivalent of Ray Dennis Steckler's Z-grade psychotropic cinema, and it's as forcefully "put as anything you'll hear on this planet anytime soon. As a companion piece, they've also resorted **The Chandeliers'** insane 64 single, On *Ray/Rave* 66 (Norton 45861 7"). These guys were from updates New

York, and their take on what proto-garage music should sound like, especially on the A-side, is quite remarkable. It's as disconnected in its own way as any known garage record and has what must be 1964's most blaring guitar break as well. Nice stuff.

I got on the new single by **Ukonut**, *I've Got Something I Can't Explain* (Saucenke SL002 7"). I'd never heard them before and I was thinking, wow, that's a great repeating industrial croak. It's so crunchy I can almost feel it. After about ten minutes I got curious about how long it can go on for, and I realised that I'd put the goddamn needle up the humblest of plates. Anyway, I listened to that for about half an hour more, then I slapped on the actual Ukonut record for a change of pace. And it's a goodie. There's no info about how many Asahara it took to screw in this particular lightbulb (maybe as few as one), but they do it real well. One side's a strummy, doney, lo-fi guitar landscape; the other uses a free jazz instrumental approach to horizontal scratch expansion. Nice goddamn keironi stick!

**Your Favourite Horse** is the new nom de studio of American Chris Jeely, who previously recorded covers of records as Acropolis Deed. His latest release is *Makeshift Stars For Railway Cars* (Sonic Sync 5305 2B"), a massive glitchy, late-cut record that processes everything in its path. The nine tracks here crackle like underdressed, arthritic shoulder joints, rolling across a mattress in the hot mid-morning sun. The sounds of actual instrumental sources (even acoustic guitar songs, for heck's sake) push their rips up and then, but, mostly this just reaches around itself for a big cup of something sweet. After my little misadventure with the Ukonut record, it was difficult to resist popping out of my seat to make sure that the needle was OK, but I persevered. This stuff is wonderful music of disorientation at its most subtle. Of course, I'm still not positive that my needle's not wrecked, but what the hell? The fact that so many young electronic artists are moving beyond the strobefest of the beat, and into the natural world (even), makes everything seem OK. // Reviewed by Byron Coley

arranged, *Loose Fur* is clearly the product of a series of jam sessions. Two or three verses are extended over six or seven minutes; and the bulk of each song is a down out coda. There are no duds, here, but no cut and out gems either.

The record highlights what a peculiar pair Tweedy and O'Rourke make. Tweedy is watchful and romantic, his down-topped voice whispering of seasons and loaves and country poets. By contrast, O'Rourke is wild and urbane, crisply crooning clever couplets that bend back upon themselves and the wit that utters them. Tweedy's fast-fid electric guitar drives straight on down the track, while O'Rourke's acute acoustic fingerpicking spins endless circles. *Loose Fur*'s finest track is surely its last, which neatly draws together these contrasting aspects. In the closing minutes, a tangle of guitar strings, gong clatter and organ swell breaks open to reveal a fingerpicking figure that's as clear, warm and welcome as morning sunlight.

## ALVIN LUCIER VESPERS & OTHER EARLY WORKS

NEW WORLD 80504 CD

BY PHILIP CLARK

It's other clanking to see the techniques of minimalist composition and process music as interchangeable. Alvin Lucier's music wants us to be more careful with our terminology. The basis of the confusion lies in how composers who do one tend to do the other. Steve Reich's *Pendulum Music* and *Piano Phase* are process pieces in the purest sense, but as soon as he rejects compositional choices, as in *Drumming* or *Musur*. For 18 *Musurans*, then the process gives way to a more traditional notion of composition.

Alvin Lucier's most famous process piece is *I Am Sitting in A Room* from 1970. It begins with Lucier describing both the room and the experience he expects listeners will encounter as the composition unfolds. His voice is fed through a tape loop system, until the deconstruction of his speech patterns into fluid texture becomes the piece. In *Vespers*, from 1969, Lucier fills his room with small clicking devices called *Sordils*, recording the sound as they bounce off the contents of the room and its walls. Lucier reckons listeners ought to be able to follow this sonic trail and build an internal image of the space and its dimensions. This fascinating concept puts the onus on the listener to do some creative listening — what's more it actually works. But it's also a tad clinical, lacking the important human face of *I Am Sitting in A Room*.

Built on a delicious deceit, *North American Time Capsule* (1967) is more fun. The sounds for the recording were made on the Sylva Electronic Systems Vocoder, which encrypts speech patterns so they can only be decoded by the system operator. Believing that superior beings in outer space can see straight through these secret codes, he's planted a joke at the core of the piece for others to chuckle over. Naturally we eardrums don't get it, but its near psychedelic wall of knotty speech sounds and slowed down buzz is compensation enough. *Elegy For Albert Anastasia* (1961-63) uses the more to-tech means of electromagnetic tape to offer a droll elegy for Mafia boss Albert Anastasia. *Anastasia* is not hard hear the sounds

he should have heard when he was sitting in the barber's chair". Where he was wasted, presumably. Lucier's piece takes electronic sounds beyond human audibility as the stuff of the piece, and builds blobs of nearly static sound that ooze with the grim suspense of US film director Sam Peckinpah's trademark spurts of blood. Yet these bell-like sounds are strangely beautiful — and you can't say that about much electronics born within a few years of Stockhausen's *Gesang Der Krieger*. Another experiment in recording acoustic space, *Chambers*, and (Middleton) Memory Space, whose players are encouraged to recreate the sounds of the city, class the disc.

## THE MAJESTICONS BEAUTY PARTY

BIG CADA B0347 CD

BY PETER SHAPIRO

"Alien Greenstein get your hands up/Billy Gates, get your hands up/Malcolm Forbes, get your hands up." The Majesticons are coming to "buy you out/Or kick you out/Or down your house/It's condos now." This savage parody of the HipHop mainstream is the second part of Mike Ladd's *Infestions* trilogy focusing on the transformation of well-acquainted Pop/Nu's army of jiggly robots from ghetto fabulous guerrilla capitalists to fully paid-up members of elite society: driving Volvos, summering in the Hamptons, "I Peleman/Director with the Liberators," flexing "ten-fiddleheads, heels, crab meat in a turtle face".

In many ways this is a HipHop's version of Funkadelic's singularly unpleasant *Amnesia Ends its Young* — but with the bad bad badness and lack of energy replaced by a righteousness tempered by an infectious esprit de corps and a sly wink. Where Funkadelic's rapturous pastiches were obviously pastiches, you have to pay attention to realise what's going on here. Ultimately this is Beauty Party's strength and weakness: tracks like "Proletaria Party", "MajestyWest Party", "Fader Party" and "From Night Party" are so close to the productions of The Neptunes, Roccivider and Dr Dre (all that musing here is an *Asha Blassie* or a snake-charmer flute sample) that they could easily slip into rotation on Hot 97 or Tim Westwood's show.

Until the lyrics jump out and bite you that is. While it may be a shock for a quinine like "Her is beauty, beauty's pain/And nothing we're with being men/as long as I look good/Just like a woman should" to be the hook from a hit! Kim put, the game's given away with lines like "I used to read the Nation sit / changed my mind/I used to study Marx, now I'm studying wine/As the times get worse, the worst go blind"; "Never been to the pen, but been close to it/Write my niggas every week/I got new material to spit up on these Beats/Your story's my glory/And my niggas say paid, so of course they vouch for me/You backpack niggas trying to ignore me/You keep it underground, I'm a keep it 40" and "At the last row of a Sotheby's auction all day/ Pump a fist with a Tiffany egg on both wrists/It's bliss, but at the country club the roses are clipped". As loud as it is to take on HipHop's robber barons on the own turf, you can't help but wonder whether the fact that the album's message relies too much on the lyric sheet is a total flaw or a mark of this album's genius.

## MASERATI THE LANGUAGE OF CITIES

KINDERCORE KCDM CD

BY FELIX CONNELL

The improbably named Maserati are a four-piece instrumental group hailing from Athens, Georgia. They follow in the tracks of other downtempo experimentalists by creating eight tracks of sublime, Eno-style, partially ambient drives. Whereas masters of the crescendo such as Godspeed create a sense of panic and despair, Maserati build up just as high but bring the rhythms down abruptly to a melodic closure and a contemplative optimism at odds with the customary bleakness of their contemporaries. In fact, their music, if not their members, have a greater affinity with the tempos of Bardo Pond and the sound of Matmos than with their fellow post-rockers.

Melody is repeated with Eno-style Ambient delay that develops and becomes enveloped within guitar patterns. Steve Scarborough's disposed, unadorned bass leads foreground the electric guitar accompaniment, while Phil Hooten's hi-hat leads the instruments in and out on slithering waves. As the name suggests (if it didn't so vividly conjure an image of Arena posters on the bedroom walls of sad teenagers), Maserati play with the notion of travel. On tracks like "The Language" and "A Common Interest in Silence", a single guitar drone portrays the sound of passing traffic on a clear highway, while they slowly amass momentum through the pile up of single drumbeats. The bass then kicks in as if it's about to stop on the gas, only to fall into step with the others. Ultimately, the contradictory impulses of Maserati's intricate and astutely beautiful music propel them down the path laid by Tortoise, Macha and Labradford.

## ANDREA NEUMANN & BURKHARD BEINS LIDINGO

ERSTWALT 026 CD

BY PHIL FREEMAN

Andrea Neumann plays the trade of a piano and operates a mooring boat; Burkhard Beins plays percussion and strings. This suggests a recipe for naughtiness, not to mention tedium, but Lidingo contains some surprisingly endovoted passages. Its five interwoven tracks make it more of a suite than a collection. "Approaching Lidingo" establishes the pattern: Neumann opens the bedding with high pitched notes and soft, metallic string plucking; and Beins joins in some three minutes later, playfully hitting a simple drum over and over, while inscribing slow circles into a cymbal. Five minutes in, the piece has doubled in volume, as vo-citched drones gradually coalesce in a cloud of sound descending from every direction at once. Eventually it devolves into various parts which drift into silence.

It's down to Beins to set the tone of the following track, after which the disc is titled, with a sound resembling water being poured on compacted plywood from a great height. But for some risky scapings Neumann is vitally absent; however she gradually asserts her presence by the end of its 25 minutes. The duo spend the rest of the disc winding down from the track's exertions. This is very much a collaborative work, requiring each of the players to closely monitor the activities of the other. If

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# The Compiler

Various artists: reviewed, rated, reviled

Rough Trade say, but rock is still 'n' roll. The Butthole Surfers

We may be oppressed by the tyranny of taste these days (gangs of earth-tone shirts staining the land, the Redneck brigade kidnapping people who should know better, hairy youth boy bands, the revisionist electronic authorized movement, techno eugenicists), but that's no reason to no longer be a total of 'n' roll. The third installment of the Rough Trade shops' 25th birthday celebrations, **Rough Trade Shops Rock And Roll 3** (like STUMM212 2XCD), is just about the most tribute to the dictatorship of neutrality. From start to finish this is lush, red-blooded, 'three chords and a cloud of dust' rock 'n' roll: no feudwakes, no 'no sleazy guitar solo sales people, we're trying to be cool' embarrassment, no irony (Jon Spencer and The Cramps accepted), no one hiding behind their thrift shop operators (The Cramps again accepted), no fashionistas wearing 'Back In Black' T-shirts when they wouldn't recognise Angus Young if he dropped trousers right in front of their faces; but there are plenty of hissing vocals, sweat, cheap beer belch, 'ring of fire' riffs and finger-painted arrays of feedback. It's an extremely mature dose of stone cold classics (The Modern Lovers' "She Cried"), contemporary stuff you shouldn't be ashamed to listen to (The Dillbeards' "Underdog"), and obscures unjustly overlooked in their day (The Embarrassment's "I'm A Don Juan"). One dubious, though: why start off the record with quite possibly the greatest, most ferocious rock record ever (The Stooges' "Gotta Get A Right"), thus rendering into quivering shambles of their former selves the hate rock of The Electric Eels, Pussy Galore and Rocket From The Tombs, the pure punk of Crime and The Saints, the unhinged acid boogie of The Butthole Surfers, the grungy oversteer of Gaunt, Monster Magnet and Mudhoney. The Birthday Party's saucy jazz, the pre-digital cybernally garage rock of Suicide's "Rock USA", the sin goddess whatever it is of The Fall, the he-man nihilism of The Weirdos, the nice guy snarl of Mission Of Burma, etc. (PS)

Of course, Mud hasn't always been in the heritage industry. It got its start by providing a home to musicians with an axe to grind with rock's axe-slingers and 'woodshedders', and tried to tear down rock's edifice with alteration and a well-placed drum machine. **Pre-set: New Electronic Music** (like STUMM211 CD), a compilation of 'demos' recently sent to the label, harks back to the old days. Of course, the concept of an 'unassigned' group these days is totally fatuous, particularly since a couple of its courses (Nurse Anne's X'S CD, Bunnyfunk) will already be familiar to hardcore electronics fans from records that have been commercially available through the standard channels, but the comp's aims are nonetheless laudable. Inevitably, it's not sheltering an undiscovered "Warm Leatherstock", let alone a "Just Can't Get Enough", yet nothing here is bad or even

particularly horrendous. And this is a nice touch: a giant diorama; so downbeat is the way that makes it potentially so compelling. The relentless march of technological progress has turned everyone into musicians, rendering irrelevant all but the most pronounced quirk, the newest production tweak or the biggest beat. (PS)

On the evidence of **Night Owls 82** (Deluxe DUXD13 CD), almost all of electronic music's quirkiness is coming from San Francisco. It begins with yet another marvellous Soft Pink Truth track, "Adrenal", sort of like a deconstructed "Voodoo Ray" with some gloomy Goth bells implying you to dance like the death dallas from Doctor & The Medicis, but no doubt constructed entirely from recordings of beeping sweat collected from 100 Sizzers DJ Mercy fans forced to spend a summer day locked in a Casco warehouse. Fellow travellers Sagan (J Lesser, Steve Bredman and Jerrin Jurek) deconstruct both Hip-hop and 50s set fit cutes like Attilio Kuroto and The Broomies an "Who Speaks For Me?", while Warmdesic's "Guars (Bedroom)" and Buzz Clacker's "Doubting In Guars" see both very fine modern takes on the echo chamber aesthetic. Elsewhere, the numerous takes on post-Matthew Herbert Microhouse with added glitch aren't so quirky or so interesting, but they won't have you reaching for your Black Sabbath records in disgust either. (PS)

Inspired by everyone's favourite Chely Chase/Rodney Dangerfield golfing movie, Cadyshack, Little De Capron's romper romp Hippy carter, "We've Got Eye Boy", which lacks off yet another electronic source, **Song Inside** (Song SONG26 CD), is happy enough to warrant your attention. Elsewhere, Dave are up to their usual ticks on "Quire", Vert pulls off the very rare feat of actually adding something to his samples of Moroccan street percussion with his electronic treatments on "All The Better To See You With". Schlammperger's "Klone Again And..." could very well be a transmutation of Love's Elizabethan West Coast neo-psych into the language of syntax and sequencers, and it can't even do it, can't. Newie & Hachsch move from contemplative field recordings to full-on Phantom of the Dopea house and again sleek. Much of the rest is either an aural record of turbo-charged popcorn kernels manically darting around the soundfield or glitchhouse grindcore and just amuses. (PS)

One annoying aspect of Makoto Kawabata and his Acid Mothers Temple family is the amount of trying to keep up with the world's most travelled psychedelic troubadours, whose tendency to speed discs with labels at every point leaves your average casual traveller's case deflated way before hitting the High Cs. Though discs are rare commodities in the AMT family outfit, they do shelter the old Father Moo & The Black Sheep. A tantalizing 22 second glimpse of the latter's electronic mission of a 'rod-like hippy radio' is projected on the second of three discs making up

**Do Whatever You Want, Don't Do Whatever You Don't Want?** (Lawson WQSM79 3XCD)

The velodromy released from a UK label with its own mind-altering agenda does the world a great service with this set's mapping of the family's restless navigations of global psychedelic, folk and rock roots. The first CD is given over to the AMT memberships' 60 minutes "Pink Lady Lemonade", the track from their 1997 debut album, **Acid Mothers Temple & The Melting Parano UFO**, that has since become the jamming touchstone of their ever-changing moods. This version's a studio consolidation of the cosmic trance take that simultaneously transfixed and transported the audience at Sterling's In Weekend Festival in 2001. Disc two is a fabulous 18 track exploration of Kawabata's AMT imprint, originally a limited edition CD-R outlet for his eclectic and insatiable musical appetites. Its catalogue of mostly Kawabata-produced projects from Japan, France and America, a star banner featuring himself and variously named AMT members, ranges across the gamut of psychodelia of his. Finally, the third disc, the new arrival of his Softy duo with AMT's Atsushi Tsuyama (hint on electric star and vocals), Tsuyama's intriguing 1979 field recordings of "Nepesole psychodelic artist" Gopal (on vocals, percussion and Tibetan flute) backed by himself on acoustic guitar, and the no less enthralling 1995 ex-Japanese tribal workout of Nipponnirapon, featuring members of a longstanding hippy commune with whom Kawabata used to, or commune. There's also Japanese biker rock and wickerball punk from The Wild Riders and Cosmic Riders respectively; plus beguiling bedouins' psychic guitar from America's bro Burke also Furuse; and, from Toulouse, Frédéric's brittle strait balladry and Ueh's subtle, guitar-induced moodshifts. The final disc is a set of Kawabata collaborations that reveal his uncanny method-like gift for living a part while slaving through it: he is a sardonic, striped doppelgänger donning with feedback-driven guitar noise Miyazaki, a so-called strange man bringer with acid-folksters Shoop-Naz, an ecstatic Metal obsession dealer with the Insurabum, or, an ultimately solitary electric guitar addict aspiring towards nothingness on the blissful "I Want You To Kiss Me Again" that concludes this amazing journey. (BK)

Only it doesn't end there for AMT, whose music clamps them to the merry-go-round of eternal returns. Between Kawabata's beaming enthusiasm, bottomless well of energy and all the time in the universe to play in, AMT appear ever ready to oblige curatorial requests, contributing a track each to **Triphopphic Mind Explosion** (Mandrager MRO11 CD) and **Hand/Eye** (Hans/Eye H/E012 2XCD), each effortlessly keying into the respective collaborators' tone. To the former, subtitled "Sounds From The Psychodrome Noise Underground", they offer the Cossan Cossini lead "Spaced Out", whose

guide cosmic whippers provide a welcome refuge from the buffeting black hole clusters of guitar reverb and machine feedback characterizing the mostly American soul-pulsating tracks by the likes of Robert W. Rabbitt and Primordial Overmind. Beyond the black hole's gravitational tug, the logging crew Paradise Camp 23 bring garage punk's buzzsaw noise to the forest; and Argentine group Reynold's place is as gorgeous as a Catholic high mass performed on the set of *Conan The Barbarian* by the cast of *Sho*. Finally, however, Finnish troupe Circle lock the disc back into its eternally recurring cycle with their densely layered and looped guitars. AMT's "Le Satyne" passes the acid folk test of the double set, **Hand/Eye**, as does the track by AMT ally Furuse. The rest is much more mixed, or not mixed enough, even though the 25 contributions are drawn from the UK, the USA, Norway, Finland and Japan. More folk as genre than noted music, too often the emphasis here is on the very frequently female voices in lagged out campfire acoustic settings. But Peets' brooding "Angels" or mood East/West ethnic instrumentation – or vice versa – is inspired; the glossy feedback of Salamander (lyrically connecting the acid-folk balance); and the otherworldly alto voice and red blue electric atmospheres of Nuneaton's Marilyn Bokes reborn traditional songbirds for their emotionally distant, centrally heated tones. (BK)

The **25th Ninth World Music Release** (Ninth World Music NWM025 CD) features 26 minutes spanning the worlds of improv and laptop composition. The honest to goodness funk beat of Diane Lavoiselle's "Mister FC" sounds a bit like Laurie Anderson becomber to her answering machine, while No Defiant neatly and effectively transforms a loop of string sawing into a small chorus of jangling brass thrust singers. Even though trombonist Johannes Bauer (his "Blink" sounds alarmingly like Phish's Mitchell's "Simon Says" at points), John Tchicai (chasing butterflies in his hair), guitarist Jørgen Teller (stronger than Moses antics) and Jelle Lørdre (her boss too-close-minded so that you can hear every nuance of contact between nylon and wood of flesh and nylon) add some timbral variation, nearly all of the musicians here come up with the same answer to the same question despite their differing approaches. (PS)

The 'shepherd's trumpet' is a huge wooden beast that plays only five pitches; since these are diatonic, it can't change key; the concertos featured on **Alphonse Carrales** (Naoas 8.555978 CD) are the Sinfonia Pastorella by Leopold Macek (Wolfgang's dad) and three from the 20th century but by the Swiss Jean Dautwyler and one by the Hungarian Ferenc Farkas. On the evidence, all three composers are deservedly little known, but the increasing desperation with which they permutate the alphonse's five tones is hilarious. (RH) Reviewed by Andy Manton, Mike App and Peter Shapiro



the piece is going to make any headway. Headphones are a must for this music, which barely rises above the threshold of audibility even in its loudest moments. It quietly demands concentration and focused listening from its listeners, and rewards both amply.

**EVAN PARKER & GEORGE LEWIS FROM SAXOPHONE & TROMBONE**  
PSI 0006 CD

**EVAN PARKER & PAUL LYTON COLLECTIVE CALLS (URBAN) (TWO MICROPHONES)**  
PSI 0006 CD

**PARKER/GUY/LYTON AT LES INSTANTS CHAVIRÉS**

BY GRIHAM MARLEY

Following a disagreement with Evans, Parker's association with the company came to an end during the 1990s, and his titles gradually disappeared from the catalogue. That was unfortunate: the Inus LPs were among the best and most innovative of his early career. During the late 1990s, Chonopace reassured his first two solo recordings, *Saxophone Solo* and *Monoceros*, and Parker's own label, PSI, has continued where Chonopace left off. Both from *Saxophone & Trombone* (1980) and *Collective Calls* (1972) were originally recorded by Inus. This is their first time on CD. The third item here, *At Les Instants Chavirés*, is a 1997 live recording by a trio that has already issued several excellent CDs during the digital era.

What's not often mentioned about Parker is how selfless a player he is: he never lets roughness over his fellow musicians. He is a collaborative music. His original sound and strong musical personality means you can always pick him out of an ensemble, but that's exactly the point of trombonist George Lewis. From *Saxophone & Trombone* is a relaxed and comradely affair. By 1980 they're familiar with each other's moves, yet they avoid complacency. Anytime when they playfully found Parker a laugh but to crack may be surprised by how melodic and accessible his playing is on this recording. That's partly due to the influence of Lewis, a hugely inventive trombonist with a firm, velvety tone, who has been heard much too infrequently in the decades since this recording was made.

From *Saxophone & Trombone* reveals the elements of Parker's master playing style were firmly in place by 1980. Eight years earlier, things were somewhat different. On "*Peacocks*", the opening track on *Collective Calls*, skirling multiphonics lines of a kind that he now plays almost exclusively on soprano saxophone are played on tenor. Occasionally he supplements his saxophony with hoarse vocal cries through the horn, a technique he soon abandoned. Parker was working then with a much wider range of instruments, including some homemade items, and Paul Lyton's kit was a vast assemblage of hitable pipes and electronics so primitive they might have been patented by Thomas Edison. The 10 recording quality of *Collective Calls* perfectly complements the grain and invention of the music. When I first heard it, this was by far the strangest and most startling thing that had come my way. It's still strange even now, and only considerable

familiarity has made it less startling.

Parker's longstanding trio with percussionist Lyton, nowdays playing a rather more orthodox kit, and double bassist Barry Guy have recorded on at least seven previous occasions; they are also at the heart of Parker's electroacoustic project, which has two recordings to its name. Although the speed and effectiveness of the trio's interactions, and the considerable refinement of both their individual and collective musical language, short-circuit the music's capacity to surprise, there's no shortage of compensations. Parker steals much to tenor, and at times his thickly woven melodic lines, increasingly reminiscent of the gronic-like authority that John Coltrane brought to tenors, bring the trio nearer to free jazz than at any time in their history. Like many a complex must, it reveals itself slowly through repeated listening, and like most of the trio's earlier recordings, it merits that degree of attention.

**PRAM DARK ISLAND**  
DOMINO WIG120 CD

BY CLIVE BELL

Formed in the Midlands in 1990, Pram were for a while too Pure latebates with Stereolab and PJ Harvey. When Pram released *Heaven* in 1994, they were almost a breeze, icy version of Stereolab, weaved and sambeable, and an occasion downright out of tune, as they wore their own dreamy veil over an energetic rhythmic drive. Since then we've had Tim Burton's *Ed Wood* movie and the rediscovery of ecotica, and Pram's sleepwalking tendencies have come to the fore. *Dark Island* is an excellent album; it still sounds like it was created during a lengthy afternoon nap, but it goes the group have the confidence to record their musings properly.

Murle Berry and the Spaghetti Western are not far away on the opening "Track Of The Cat", as rattlesnake longes and big tenor guitars snarl during a whirling wind. Then a gorgeous truckling keyboard kicks off "Penny Arcade", and Rosie Cuckling launches the latest from her repertoire of lozenges. "A private life the dreamer leads/No guidebook to the world of dreams." This is classic Pram territory: trumpet and theremin enter the textures generated by the cowbells collection of Mong, Van and Farida keyboards. Without shedding any of her cunning naivety, Cuckling's singing is stronger and better produced than on earlier albums.

"Paper Hats" looks at the rear view mirror, with a Stereolab-type tune, and "Peepshow" adds the drowsiest of drowsiness to a battered line-up that you suspect Tim Wants would appreciate. But the album's second half saves the bar higher. "The Archivist" is a song about the impossibility of hanging onto the past. Old rhythms, almost a Greek dance, peter out into a glorious cavern of echoes, finally settling a swirling tangle of cheap keyboards. Pram have always excelled at sounding like no one else, but this type of adventurous arranging shows them to be masters of the 10-11 dreamscape.

The closing "Distant Islands" reveals another strength, a skewed loyalty to an old tradition of melodic songwriting. Buoyed up on xylophone and organ, this buoyant, romantic song about hesitation in the face of two would hardly be out of place in *The King And I*. A Pram music? Surely just a matter of time.

**THE SEA AND CAKE ONE BEDROOM**  
THRILL JOCKEY THRILL IT CD

BY AINE HULDE NESSET

If it ain't broke don't fix it. Eight years down the line, Chicago post-punk outfit The Sea And Cake have stayed true to their chosen path. Made up from Sam Prekop's breathy, testosterone-free vocal and guitar and Eric Clavidge on bass (they were both members of underground Chicago folkie jazz outfit Shrimp Boat in the late 80s/early 90s), plus Cuckling's complex drums and former cocktail shaker Archer Prentiss's twangy guitar, The Sea And Cake hammer the same nail with every release; and sure enough their sixth album *One Bedroom* contains few surprises. Recalling the Postcard band of Orange Juice and the molaric change of Stereolab, Prekop's gentle, high pitched singing conveys with the group's jazzy arrangements, into synch with complex electronic and odd, untweaked guitar, comes far more understated but perfectly melodic and deconstructed pop.

Their previous album *One* featured collaborator like Bill Bishop, and was more free flowing as a consequence. If *One Bedroom* is less jazzy, it's also more defined. "Four Corners" and "Left Side Clouds" are classic SC6, soothing, melancholy, sweet without being sugary – like good dark chocolate – with tinkly guitars and husky melodious basslines broken up by distortion. The more rhythmic "Hotel Tel" makes use of McCreedy's programming skills, as Prekop pursues over their restrained yet irresistible drum machine thumps. The album highlight is their perfect remake of David Bowie's "Sound And Vision". Apparently planned for years, the group's lush arrangements and multilayered details are tailored to Bowie's breathless conversations. With its vaguely conceived images, Prekop's lyrics recall American poet John Ashbery, whose elusive lines can sound like a one-sided conversation: "Watch their mouths can smile/With delicate descriptions I used to know/Le small like a recuse in slow motion/The new lives/We never fails to be disarming." He sings in "Le Bateau", dropping such offhand nonsequiturs all over the album.

Impenetrable maybe, but his unadorned language makes it somehow inviting. There's not much to gush with in this music, its smoothness and perfection making it as slippery as an eel on soap bar in a bathtub. In contrast to the seaming randomness of The Sea And Cake's lyrics, the music is perfectly sculpted around the vocals. The production is so delicate and the arrangements so well crafted and full of detail that you can't help being utterly seduced by this open-ended, non-narrative yet elegant and accessible pop music.

**SHIFTED PHASES THE COSMIC MEMOIRS OF THE LATE GREAT RUPERT J ROSINTHORPE**  
THRILL THE CD

BY MOSH REBEV

For the past ten years, the Detroit-based electro outfit Drexciya have successfully operated in near secrecy. But earlier this year, they suddenly converted to press interviews for their latest album, *Harnessed The Storm*. Their going public was shortly followed by the shocking news that James Sison, the group's central

figure, had died from heart complications on 3 September at the age of 32. Months later, a new Drexciya album under the pseudonym of Shifted Phases hits the shops, leading some to wonder if Sison's death was an elaborate hoax. Sadly, it is all too real, and the Shifted Phases project is his last recorded work.

Sison always treated Drexciya's trademark anonymity, generated by antiquated keyboards and synths, as a method of exploring electronic frontiers, rather than as a cheap pop or 'electronic' gimmick. On *Cosmic Memoirs* he replicates atmospheric sounds, from engines speeding into the flames underneath a spaceship shooting into the sky as "White Dwarf" to the whirling of mass control computers on "Wellborn Cascades". Songs like "The Freak Show" and its otherworldly collage of breathy, transgender vocals conjure tales of adventures on werty moonshaken planets. Elsewhere, the eerily melodic lead over airy effects and a hard bass drum of "Lorey Journey" depicts the solitary nature of space travel. Together, the 11 instrumental tracks form a rough outline of an impressionistic narrative with enough hooks to feed the listener's imagination and leaving them to fill in the details.

Alternating tough, lead keyboard lines with repetitive arpeggios, *Cosmic Memoirs* is nevertheless mostly quiet and graceful, with little extraneous noise. It is also warm and optimistic, especially on the closing "Flora", which suggests that Mr Rosintorpe's escapades are never-ending, from this life to the next.

**MICHAEL SNOW HEARING AID**  
SUPPOSE LC1049 CD

**CCMC + CHRISTIAN MARCLAY**  
NON MUSICA RE0003341007M004 CD

BY PHILIP CLARK

The American experimental film maker, conceptual artist and pianist, Michael Snow has spent the past 40 years exploring the perception of pictorial images by a society that often struggles to avoid meaning out of the information overload. As Andre Breton writes in his foreword, the numbing repetition of B/11 footage has given Snow's work unexpected topicality and his devising of 'comparable strategies' in the fields of the visual and acoustic arts have offered a 'point of departure when searching for a concept of the image in the 21st century'. *Hearing Aid* is the catalogue of a 2002 exhibition of Snow's work at the Gallery Klotzstraße in Berlin. Perhaps it should be thought of as the 'loss', the realisation of those concepts as real-time sonic performance happens on the disc as Snow's Montreal based Improv group CCMC.

The *Hearing Aid* exhibition put acoustic works in a space normally reserved for images. Rather than merely documenting these sounds, the CD version continues Snow's genre-blending by offering an audio documentary on the history of his *Hearing Aid* project. The longest event on the disc is a 20 minute discussion of his methods and techniques, taped at an earlier incarnation of the show in 1995. While touring the exhibition, Snow describes how he feeds the best of a microphone and random noise from the exhibition space through different tape recorders. The resulting document is as vivid as a sonic photograph. "Goodness, that was a big one!" he



# The Boomerang

New reissues: rated on the rebound

Fires ain't what they used to be: **Edward Vesala**

As bass players did back in the 70s, **Pekka Pohjola** of the Prog group Wigwag made a solo album. He went into Finland's Suvisaari, Helsinki, in early 1972, and emerged with Pekinenselän Koskenkallio (Steam-Eye Rock-Ear) Love LR21 CD. Ojaneit Jukka Gustavson used the church organ steps associated with Canterbury Rock, while the boisterous rhythms evoke a bunch of hipsters in jester's minkie looting around made a riled cascade. When Pekola plays solo violin over a vamp, it sounds like a tighter version of early Soft Machine. The story has it that his studio arrangements were too "incredibly complex" for the musicians to take on the road, though today the driving rock beat sounds impressively simple. Now we're up to our ears in push-button "complexity," virtual avant garde and techno cut-up, it's impossible not to be moved by this brief moment in pop history: the Prog rock belief that, by dumping every harmonic advance since Hindemith and using electronic instruments, the musician's personal touch and commitment would usher in a bucolic, unpolished utopia (meanwhile punk slashed in the wings, neck-chain again, sharpening its toxic safety pin). Pohjola's writing had improved by 1974's *Rainakko* Basiopokku (Love LR118 CD). His suite, topped and tailed by the beguiling elf "Life Goes On," is a perfect example of the rock style which assailed the basic ideas of the classical "group miniaturism" of Louis Andriessen, Michael Nyman and Steve Wolfard. Yet it does not feel like heterodox experiment, more like pop infused with symphonic ambitions. There's no post-modern cynicism, and even Kowalevski's sax solos are raw and expressive. "Basiopokku" Denotes "the glimmering," lone-parts beat which makes the music on Egg's Virgin releases so attractive. On "The Madness Suburbs," Coste Aspetra achieves the guitar solo everyone was playing that year: Clayton's blues out of BB King leavened with major-key surmise harmonies. By the end of 1976, Pohjola had reached the top of his profession: he composed Keskisen Lohko (Love LR219 CD) in rural Goussierstrasse, with Mike Offord producing. By now the sheer quantity of his work made one marvel how an entire genre could be made of music which is forever announcing and announcing: all farfare and no development. For Prog rockers, assonate form and musical argument must appear domestic and modular. Consequently everything becomes modular themes and the music is identifiably pop: "Thelastu Mithalyth?" recalls Queen's title music for the camp masterpiece Flash Gordon, occasionally one long for some improved or altered melody. On the plus side, despite the haphazard and maddening, there's no mindfully wiff of authenticity: everything is recorded with maximum punch. The synthesized strings are not substitutes, but signals of hi-tech glamour.

In this period, the divisions between rock and jazz weren't tightly drawn. **Juhani Auttomaan** 1974 *Equinox* (Love LR132 CD) features the artist's brood and fixed tenor sax, a quartet of Ajala and Delphy to that of US saxophonist Bennie Wallace. The sense of suspended time says "free jazz," yet Hesse Wahl's guitar has some of the rising exaltation of Clapton with Cream. Produced by drummer Edward Vesala, the drums and metal percussion sound especially gorgeous. Overcasting of bowed wood and double bass results in a melancholy, orchestral vibe. Recording technology has brought Nordic folk song into the urban milieu, though without the vim and thrust of the blues. The musicians sound like they already knew the harmonic territory and are concentrating on sound: the music paints pictures rather than questioning them's flow.

**Panini Esa Helanen's** Q (Love LR201 CD) was recorded in 1976, again produced by Vesala, who also played percussion on these Helanen arrangements for a string sextet. On Jaakko Luukkainen's cover, the sun's red disc over a flower field meadow and Helanen's blonde moustache simply scratch 70s art-pop popp. "Onniskä" (not Charlie Parker's tune) resembles Alice Coltrane, but lacks the keyy twist that makes her interesting. Helanen is pursuing Keith Jarrett's anti-modernist method of dealing with the crisis in classical music. Instead of exploring it, he uses the tubule (in the manner of Ravel, David Tudor and the late Impresario), the ability to extemporize freely, not means to keep the floppy flag of light romanticism afloat.

On the back of his 1976 LP *Rodina* (Love LR189 CD), cult percussionist/composer **Edward Vesala** is pictured in dark glasses, broad-brimmed hat and black flares, his willingness to pose at odds with the outlaw image. The music likewise belies the persona portrayed in Markku Salo's sleeve notes: "His continuous conflict with the all too bourgeois and academically oriented Finnish jazz circles and their unhappy marriage to commercialism." "Lapsien" could be the missing link between Björk and Andrew Lloyd Webber, as an exaggerated vocal makes a drama of a simple folk tune. Auttomaan is present on tenor, but banal orchestration renders it as lachrymose as a West End musical Vesala would with poet **Arto Mäkelä** to create a kind of dramatic canon on the 1982 LP *Mau-Mau* (Johnny Jann 201 CD). Its slight debt to authentic No Wave New York (ie James Blood Ulmer and Sonny Sharrock) is incurred without the desecration of musical conventions. There's something stage managed and preposterous about a lightly assonate orchestra and chorus crowding around in expensive recording studio pretending they're blood-sweating hatheens. Lacking the existential conviction and political acuteness which fueled Patti People Of The

Unknown, *Mau-Mau* comes low on Roger Jom's index of Comparative Vandalism.

No run-up of the contemporary contextualization of Finnish musical culture would be complete without mentioning two vinyl reissues aimed at Dis: saxophonist **Eero Kolehmainen's** 1970 *Roots* 8 (Sähkö/Onka JAZZPUUS 12") and **Old Ahvenlahti's** Countenance from 1975 (Sähkö/Love JAZZPUUS 12"). Kolehmainen's disk is 45rpm on one side and 33rpm on the other: having negated that, the results will fascinate fans of Nucleus, the British ensemble which took hard bop into fusion and ended up sounding like TV music: "Five Blue Tones" borrows Miles Davis' "In A Silent Way" baggala beat and echo's trumpet; brief passages of free jazz turbulence waft through a fundamentally static structure, while wah-wah guitar adds a bohemian sense of aphorism, creating the yeasty atmosphere to be enjoyed on contemporary Wabbeke Axis recordings. Ahvenlahti's disk is jazz rock with "a slight Latin touch." Trumpeter Bertti Lahtinen tries to be Maynard Ferguson over a gite 'n' greens soul-jazz rhythm. Jari Huikonen's remix adds the expected beeps and biddles, making the original sound even more like cheesy no 4 Muzak found on a boat sale rack. No doubt this is a squeaking jazz rock into an even more regrettably matrix-stagnant in the name of fun. Depressing. (BW)

Stompboxes are standard issue forerun for Brian untouchables **The Butthole Surfers**, who come over on their tremendous 1983 debut EP and its live repeat run, now remastered together as *Butthole Surfers - Live* (PCPPE [Lilith Bigger Yet LIVE] CD), like they've just broiled and eaten their own acid-fied brains in a preparatory ritual for the act about to begin. There's nothing holy or even heretically Dostoyevskian about the Butthole racket, however, unless you think the surreal passage to enlightenment is through your own asshole. Not so much space cadets as LSD's punishment battalion, *The Butthole Surfers* is one helluva sultry, moan and screamingly resentful acid trip. But then, no other acid music is this ripped or ragged. The heavily reverberating, visceral noises of Butthole guitarist Paul Leary either sheer away from the group's bawling boar rhythms; or they rebound heavily on them in a messy carbon slap. Meanwhile vocalist Gibby Hayes, or Leary on occasional lead, drol through early Butthole standards like "The Shape Shifter in Lee Harvey's Grave," "Bar-B-Q Pop" and "The Revenge Of Angus Presley," with a wit to offend so absurdly transparent, its cartoon hostility leaves you grinning like a fool. The Butthole rebound. Indeed, few exchanges this side of the *Stooges*' notorious last stand are so audaciously distancing as Gibby's rning of the audience on Live/PCPPE. Clearly when the Buttholes knocked at the door of perception, someone slammed it on their fingers. (BW)

Swiss pianist **Irène Schweizer** confirmed her status as a major voice in European Free Improvisation with the new *Irène Schweizer/Heinrich Schütz* (Intakt 014 2XCD), initially issued on FMF vinyl in 1977. Her fierce attack has raised the usual comparisons with Cool Taylor, but Schweizer's pacing, placement and range of reference are quite distinct. Rolling chords emerge, redolent of Dollar Brand. She invades the piano's interior, lodges the instrument with drumsticks and symbols, then lodges a fragment of attractive melody in the memory, produces an arresting rhythmic figure or an off the wall harmonic progression. Schweizer's commitment to the piano is absolute; she often seems to be melting into its sound. At the same time her music always reaches out, making its appeal in a dazzlingly multifaceted, yet rhythmically coherent voice. (JC)

Scottish duo **Boards of Canada** have at long last remastered, recut and resuced their highly coveted 1995 mini-album debut, *Twoism* (Warp WARP20 CD/LP). If its tiny first pressing only let a privileged few hear Marcus Eoin and Michael Sandison's template for their acclaimed *Musik Has The Right To Children* and *Geogaddi* albums, it scarcely impeded the word of mouth buzz rapidly infusing BOC's stock. Contrasting blissful, melodic excursions of digitized and electronic dissonance over lush, HoPegish beats, BOC's signature tension is already in place. Midway through, however, the trumpet coils of "Baseform" sound a brief respite from BOC's vaguely sinister elusiveness, unleashing a rampage of bass heavy elephant beats. But with "Severe Lullaby" and "Smokes Quantity," which both crop up on later releases, BOC bring the beats to order, their repetitive rhythms hypnotically returning a dreamstate. Bleeding into two beatless minutes of an unlinked "hidden track," 1986 *Summer Fire*, the latter is already reluctant to let go your hand. For there's something unsettling about the music's wistful effect: it occurs you in a nostalgia papered with someone else's memories (Bette Davis's, perhaps, in her role as The Nurse). (HC)

Created in 1989 by Future Sound Of London's Brian Douglas to accompany Mark Molloy's head-bending word graphics and finally appeared on CD, **Stinkies' Eumetichia** (Rephlex CAR129 CD) is an agonistic 25 minute sequence of baid ups, breakdowns, 303s and four to the floor beats. Rephlex are to be congratulated for rescuing this unique moment in the history of raw from its original fate. The vocals had ended up, as with so many hundreds of human endosound being combusted for a Pet Noire album that was later withdrawn when viewers complained it induced epileptic fits. They were probably just on one, maybe 10/10. Reviewed by Heidi Chapman, Alan Cowley, Ken Halliday, Biba Kopf and Ben Watson





yells, responding to a deafening clatter behind him; the rich soundscape he provokes from such deceptively simple means is inspiring.

The most revealing of Snow's insights is his observation that the steady metronome pulse forms a "frame" for the regular sounds it surrounds. As the metronome sound is universal, and the noises coming from the room are by definition unique, the question of the origin and authenticity of Snow's music remains safe from the usual argument about musical "style" through which discourse about new music is normally judged. COMC, with vocalist Pat Duton and John Oswald on saxophone, convincingly transform this concept into "proper" musical material. The trio sometimes congeal into a seamless pontifical mass, and at other times they frame one another at radiocally oblique angles. In the *Willy 219*, John Oswald described the alto as his "little instrument." Well, his playing is never going to win any awards, but his disembodied squeals grind with telling force against the concurrences of borrowed material. Snow plunders from his CAT synthesizer. A Mahler string section, Pavarotti, 1950s jazz and a Latin-American group are the recognizable "sound photographs" viewed and commented on from a distance by the group. With Duton's Phil Milton-like vocalisations adding dancing linguistics, these compelling improvisations drew you into a strangely claustrophobic world.

## BURKHARD STANGL & DIEB13

EH  
CROSSWIRE 025 CD  
BY DAN WARBURTON

Oh is the third Easthale album to feature Burkhard Stangl. Like its predecessors *Schoene* and *Whipped Angels*, it was recorded at Christoph Antrix's studio in Vienna. Partnering him here is turntablist and laptop artist dieb13, aka Dieter Kowalczyk; both are seen in *Elong* with Berni Hauf and Martin Sewart. Thanks to dieb13's nimbly, zap-zooms and creaky scratches of old cassette tapes, *Oh* is considerably more varied than the unimaginative track titles identifying them — essentially four letter permutations of "e" and "r." It's also livelier than the guitarist's recent work with SSSD, his spaced-out quartet with Stewart, Werner Dolefischer and Lutz Sugawara.

Stangl has been playing a lot of chess with Sugawara lately, however, and he's quite content to let his gorgeous first-inversion 11th chords fade away while he considers his next move. The long final track finds him exploring various permutations of an E-flat guitar cadence against a glissando backdrop of tiny cymbals and bloops. You could almost say a lazy backbeat behind it, and let it float on forever, but Kowalczyk whips the mugs; carpet from under the guitar and leaves it hanging in the air.

## TRI-DIM & JIM O'ROURKE & BARRY GUY

2 OF 2  
SOIFA 510 CD  
BY DAVID KEENAN

Tri-Dim are a young improvising trio from Scandinavia whose line of about 1000 postlist juxtaposition could almost be Dutch. Drummer Ingar Zach, who keener ears will recognise as one of Derek Bailey's more challenging duo partners, is the dominant voice, dictating the

trio's timbral concerns with percussive accents that skirt the guts of the kit in favour of fast single shots at cymbals and bells. Acoustic guitarist David Szostakian blows effusively behind him, announcing scabbling runs by sharply enunciated single notes. In this company, Norwegian saxophonist Håkon Komsdal has a little trouble getting his foot in the door. For a while he simply rattles at the edges of Szostakian and Zach's accents, but once he pops up as opening his burrows into the high end spitting staccato from top up register before clearing some room with a series of explosive valve shots that give the nod to Mats Gustafsson's enveloping textures. For much of the rest of the track, a live recording from a club in Oslo, it's hard to work out who's doing what, with uncomfortable sounds blinding off each other in contradictory directions.

The second track is a Jim O'Rourke remix, welded together from various live performances. He smears notes into deep katon calls and slows the trio's rate of response to the point where you can actually hear notes crossing in mid-air. These illuminated details are interspersed with pregnant blobs of silent thought. The last two tracks are taken from a live collaboration with bassist Barry Guy at Makle International Jazz Festival in 2001. Guy provides some much needed bottom end, drawing Zach into a series of muscular rumbles. He also adds some light-hearted commentary during Guy's solo, sounding like he's pulling an endless chain of cartoon parts from a car engine. It's only when Szostakian and Guy enter into dialogue that the ideas temporarily stall, with Szostakian falling back on note and response despite Guy's attempts to shake him. But once they dedicate themselves they really start to sing, with Guy's waxy bow work forcing them to drop the ping-pong and join in the dance.

## MASAYOSHI URABE & GARY SMITH

MASAYOSHI URABE & GARY SMITH  
PARACATLE PLE1112 CD  
BY JULIAN COWLEY

It's strange how the blatantly obvious is often overlooked. Gary Smith's electric stereo guitar playing is self-evidently exceptional, yet his name is often neglected when cutting-edge guitarists are discussed. His solo work has shown him plugging his own course, without need or impulse to follow improvised music's familiar constellation of guiding lights.

And he's not one to shrink into the background in group contexts — look no further than his imposing work with bassist Hugh Hopper and drummer Shoji Hase in the excellent *Class Cage* to wish proof of that. Perhaps Smith's readiness to switch between jazz-rock amalgams and more freely improvised work has in some way diluted his impact. It's a readiness he shared with drummer John Stevens, and the CD they made together in 1993 for the Ecstatic Power label, not long before Stevens's death, showed the acute responsiveness and flexibility they also had in common.

This new release, recorded in London in April 2001, finds Smith in dialogue with Japanese alto saxophonist Masayoshi Urabe. Urabe is a pressure cooker player. Each uttered note is fought for, an eruption forced to the surface by

the pent-up force within. His urgent bursts, explosive pops and tense, no longer containable scowls and stifled wails sound remarkably effective studded against Smith's voluble swell and swoop.

The guitar's tense aspect enables Smith to surmount up apertures of chords that melt into a wash or a smear across the channels. He also sets up tumbling streams of notes that collide and disperse, leaving an unclouded sense of focused animation. But, even more than on that encounter with Stevens, the guitarist reveals his capacity to home in on his collaborator's intentions to the point where at times, despite their striking dissimilarity, it's not entirely clear who's playing what.

On the second and shorter of the CD's two tracks, Urabe sets aside his horn and takes up harmonica and autoharp, posing other challenges to Smith's resourcefulness. The roar and thrust of Smith's voluminous contribution to *Class Cage*, Powerfield (with the electronics of Joe Gallivan and Pat Thomas), and his trio Mass are necessarily muted or left implicit when ranged against such modest instrumentation. Urabe effectively limits his own expressive scope in order to press the lid on still more firmly. Smith, at once an acute listener and a shrewd initiator, manages some terse yet expansive settings for Urabe's scowly sounds.

The kinds of effects that he habitually deploys tend to sit astride among listeners to improvised music, largely because they have been typically used for Nordic embellishment by rock guitarists. But he has integrated them substantially into his style, as elements of a functioning musical language rather than showy trappings. John Stevens appreciated that kind of refinement and discipline. So too does Masayoshi Urabe. At the end of the disc are heard talking to each other as they audit the playback, concluding that it is "good". The evidence here confirms they're right: it is very good.

## VARIOUS THE FIRE THIS TIME

HIDDEN ART HART11 EXCD  
BY LOUISE GRAY

When Grant Wakefield, the man behind the two discs that make up *The Fire This Time*, took his recordings to the BBC, the rebuke he received was unexpected. "We didn't," someone there said, "listen to radio!" Which is sad, not least because if such voices of dissent were allowed to be heard, the world might not be in such a state.

The theme here, if it's not *dislike*, is *war*, and Wakefield is full on: *Dislike*, *Blair* and co., clamping at the bit about the prospect. Simply speaking, *The Fire This Time* is an unusual album. One disc features 13 mostly unreleased instrumental outbursts by the likes of Aphex Twin, Orbital and the Higher Intelligence Agency. It's good, atmospheric stuff of a kind that functions as a soundtrack for an interior drama of your own making. Back Luigi's record of Aphex Twin's "Come to Daddy" has a grinning, grinding mechanistic horror about it, while Some's "Get Two Behind Me" specialises in close-patterned beats that atch up the blood pressure.

But Wakefield isn't really interested in the small picture. The real action happens over on the main disc, where the same tracks can be heard, only this time overlaid by a 75 minute exposition of the West's dealings with Iraq. It's a

blow by blow story of duplicity and diplomacy fought out in the fields of Mesopotamia. Wakefield's story, in as much as it is his, is spliced together from voice over, wild clips, interviews. And it's shockingly bloody in its import. *The Fire This Time* is a lot of things: a side play, a play of inconvenient facts, one man's response to confronting career...

Wakefield takes his title from a book written in 1991 by the former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark, documenting the aftermath of the first Gulf War in Iraq. Neither Clark nor this album are in the business of propaganda, which is one good reason to hear it, if only once.

## VARIOUS JAPANESE AVANT-GARDE

SUB ROSA 92022 CD  
BY ALAN CUMMINGES

Another wild kettle of fish from Belgian masters of the bizarre, Sub Rosa. The label describes the album as an attempt to document a perceived sense of cross-disiplinary creativity shared between contemporary Japanese avant garde musicians — such as Medusa, Neco, Keji Asano, Otsuo Yoshinaka and Akio Doi — and radical film makers. The area certainly been one exploring. A new generation of young directors like Sogo Isha, Shunya Ishikawa and Shinya Fujita grew up on punk and No Wave, and they are eager to transfer the music's energy and aesthetics both to screen and onto their soundtracks. You could, for example, point to Tsukamoto's inspired long-term collaboration with industrial noise musician Toyohiko on films like the body-horn dance *Taboo*, or to the series of no holds barred rock units he's led by, or coming the other way, to the affecting soundtrack work of Otsuo.

But rather than developing and extending such linkages in any imaginative way, Sub Rosa's sole gaudy towards the movie element has been to close the CD with two extracts from interviews with Tsukamoto and controversial *Avant* director Takashi Miike. Both audio interviews are entirely in Japanese, though somewhat problematic translations are included in the booklet — the Miike translation, for example, includes material not included on the audio track. Quite what non-Japanese speaking listeners are supposed to get from these two tracks is unclear. The relationship between the chosen musicians and the directors, beyond cataloguing them together under the ludicrously broad label of "extremity," seems non-existent.

Which is a shame, because since you get past this baffling conceptual framework, there is actually much to recommend the record. Grouped broadly around the twin poles of agitation/noise and stillness/silence, the tracks give a good sense of the different strategies adopted by Japanese musicians during the 90s to deal with urban strain, noise pollution and political disengagement.

Standouts include Hiro's sped-up sentimental piano over percussion clutter and mechanical orchestra (though we could have done without nine minutes worth of the evening she spent at the local pachinko parlor), an unusually viral track by Sachiko M which uncannily recreates electronically the sounds of a Japanese summer — glass wind chimes over background clouds when. Although previously released, a 1992 live set by Ground Zero with Guy on vocals is a timely reminder of how devastating this group could be.

## Soundcheck

### VARIOUS VIRGINIA ROOTS: THE 1929 RICHMOND SESSIONS OUTHOUSE 101 2XCD BY BEN WATSON

Founded in 1918 as the German branch of Carl Lindstrom's Phonograph label, Okeh Records pioneered the issue of jazz with King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band and Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Hot Seven. They had a strong line in other indigenous musics, and over five days in October 1929 in Richmond, Virginia, they recorded 30 groups singing 35 songs, of which 36 were recorded on 18 78rpm records: gospel, hymns, Schottisches, harmonic blues, Hawaiian, rag and jazz (let us not tell that categorical proliferation is a recent phenomenon). This reissue reconstructs that week from the shellac originals, with accompanying photographs, plus essays by different experts on each tune. Compiler Ron T. Carby includes a woodcut he feels portrays a wind-up gramophone: he calls it "the time machine." The whole collection breathes ecstasies.

As their logo, Outhouse Records use a line drawing of a farmhouse which, making it legitimate to ask whether the intervening 74 years haven't likewise devalued the music, making it quaint and safe. Actually, because contemporary pop and rock have been carved from these song forms, these sides have the opposite effect. Like Harry Smith's *Anthology Of American Folk Music*, this collection bursts across time, searing the heart with its ruggedness and energy. If you're going to be anything more than a trivial pursuer of celebrity and distraction, it needs to take two steps back and learn from stuff like this.

Gospel quartets are well represented, with The Sparkling Four, The Golden Crown, The Norfolk Jubilee and The Richmond Starlight (the one check on the compilation, their "Jazz Crazy Blues", was actually recorded by Okeh in New York in December 1928, but the way it bends religious song towards secular pleasures is so fetching you forgive the compilers). Via Louis Jordan, doo-wop and The Coasters, quartet gospel fed directly into rock 'n' roll, though it took a good deal of complexity on the way. On the Sparkling Four tracks, the audio restoration by Andrew Masterson is amazing, bringing the four vocalists into resplendent 3D stereo. The pre-war vibrato sounds went enough, but the post-singing asides: limited means led to concentration on note combinations which flower in arid bouquets of unrespected harmony and resolution. On "Scandalous My Name", the bass singer starts earlier and sings lower, using motifs which the higher voices take faster: the idea of time manipulation was sped up and slowed down time is already part of the form, giving the music an instantaneously lacking in these patterns after the universal time of the symphonic master songs. There's no beat or reverberation to hide the individual voices: the four way pose and interaction recall the great classical string quartets.

The gravitas of gospel was offset by humor. The Sparkling Four's "Get Up Off That Jazzophone" has a bawpy howl sounds plunked delicious next to the thrilly ethereal sounds of soprano sax and waltz. Blues firebrand's "Bless harmonic sounds like a nifty pump, each 'bump' working like a joke in a music hall routine: novelty as the essence of musical entertainment.

The Jubilee Royal Hawaiian Orchestra, run by employees of the rayon-manufacturing Tubite Artificial Silk Company in Hawaï, Virginia, show how the hovering twang of the Hawaiian guitar could cut through 78rpm noise and radio static. The Roanoke Jug Band's "Home Brew Rag" proves that cantabile humour is a real entity.

This release is important in a way that's impossible to explain until you've heard Bela Lam and His Greene County Singers – followers of Alvin Karpis' "seven shape notation system" – reveal the root and very intention of Blue Ridge Mountain music on "All It Agins". Their ensembles invent the use of the banjo from the great true-rural camp meetings of the 1780s and 1790s, and their rolling, selectable rhythms and apocalyptic imagery hark back to that time, and forward to the folk protests of the 60s. Astonishing, vital sounds.

### VOICE SPHERE WHERE ALL THE FROZEN THINGS WENT... ATVARIAM 010 CD BY BRIAN MARLEY

Where All the Frozen Things Went... is an exploration of glacial sounds and structures by Swiss vocalist/electronicist Franziska Baumann. Each of the pieces has been constructed out of detailed recordings of ice. She admits that after having worked and reworked these sounds, only a residue of the source may remain, but it will have found its "local correspondences". As an artist in residence at "Voal, Amsterdam", she showed the cyborgine as a means of scouting life and pre-recorded sound using physical gesture. She extended its parameters by weighing a location down between the toes of her right foot.

On "Blizzards", Baumann leans and undulates. Although she's threatened by electronic waltzes and wispy exclamations, she swoops down canyons of ice and crests jagged ridges. But her voice isn't always used so effectively. The abstract scrooge on "Drops" sounds jazz-like and is stylistically incongruous and mannered, as is her whole note singing on the title track and the wordless lyricism of "Ice & Fire Plasma". When her voice isn't fully integrated into the soundscape, often it becomes merely decorative. When she uses extended vocal techniques – the kind that Sanku Namchikyak does imaginatively, but Baumann sometimes has to struggle to achieve – the music flows more freely, and some of it is very good indeed. But for every successful piece, there's one that fails to get. The fundamental problem is that the ice possesses many vibrating voices; and what Baumann does with them is more interesting than anything her vocal cords can muster.

### WACHSMANN/HUGH/ GRYDELAND/ZACH/ WAZAHUGY SOFA 504 CD

### NO SPAGHETTI EDITION PASTA VARIATIONS SOFA 509 CD BY BEN WATSON

Few improvisers have understood Don Drey's discovery of timbral seawater inside Don Jones's subdued beats, but the musicians behind Norway's Sofa label, hug Grydeland on guitar and Ingar Zach on percussion, are blessed with such an understanding. This approach – utterly

detached from the swelling detail of the Spontaneous Music Ensemble or the Naiming For God endlessness of AMM – opens up time, padding in more changes per second than seems musically possible. Philip Wachsmann, on viola and electronics, and Charlotte Hug, on viola and electronics, are a canny choice for a quartet, since their bowed instruments imply a horizontal continuity far removed from the purely split-split which Zach and Grydeland excel at. Choice of engineers (Roby Robinson and Lee Rowman) and studio (London's Most Studio) is likewise canny, since Robinson's Most operation is emerging as the best for microphones.

Marathons doesn't give a stereo illusion of four musicians in real space, but the way it renders each instrument so vividly present makes for a thrilling listen. Even if one objects to certain musical decisions, Hug's repeated *fff* 13 minutes into the opener puts a brake on the collective energy, and occasionally Wachsmann's verbose melancholy sounds mannered. There's also an unlisted four minute encore where a new energy sweeps the musicians along.

No Spaghetti Edition deliberately jettison the pose of pure Grydeland/Zach projects, being an opportunity to enter a host of other musics. For Pasta Variations, the guests at Lou Bryggen, Stavanger and Bilo, Oslo, were: Phil Minton (voice), Pat Thomas (keyboard), Mikon Konstad (bass), Frode Høi (accordion) and Tonny Klüften (bass). Though Klüften is a Solo regular too, there's some curious, delicious stuff along with less vertiginous passages (eg eight minutes into "PFE", as the accorion frolics over a Norwegian street music). Phil Minton is his hair-raising set, cutting through the septet clutter to achieve remarkable moments.

### WINDY & CARL INTROSPECTION BLUE FLEA 012 2XCD BY BYRON COLEY

The Michigan Underground Space Rock scene has, in certain senses, been hijacked by its Dionysian wing in the recent past. The spasmodic farm-thriller of the American Tapes/Hanson Records news uses so much album room for its aesthetic gestulation that there's precious little space for any other local moment. Thus, it is with real misgiving and a kind of self-hated surprise that I am looking to this massive compendium of non-album tracks from the first decade of Windy & Carl's existence. This Michigan duo are one of the true originators of MUSR impulse and also represent the movement's most heady Aphelion possibilities.

Windy Weber and Carl Hultgren began recording in 1992. Carl played guitar; Windy played bass and sang. The pair have recorded steadily, creating a wonderful, virtually beat-free zone of dreamy, droney invention and extended-formal swirl-pool, with as much anti-gravity-gunge potential as a cloud. They have released a boatload of excellent records on labels like Kanku, Ooze, Ooze and (le-Oo-ling). Introspection captures another four hours of material that has floated loose during this process.

The first disc collects 16 tracks from various singles. These songs range from the vaguely Anglo-disordered gaze part of their earliest efforts, through lushly textured and multilayered instrumental drones with some Kim Gordon-like vocal injections, into a very American-sounding

kind of place recalling the most recent work of Kendra Smith. Guitars are always at the centre of their creative core, but the waltz of attack, the textures of acoustic strings woven into some of the best pieces, and the endless denotations of subconscious vocal layering, give Windy & Carl's material a creative width that is expansive even under the confines of "f" formatting.

The second disc collects tracks from compilations albums, including their excellent cover of the Silver Apples' "Pragati". A few key vocal numbers sink mid-period Noe. There's also a long set of instrumental in the tradition of Fopp & Eno's No. 10. This material, now that the single tracks, is most congruent with my memories of the group's infrequent live dates, which were glacially transcendent evenings of guitar-strewn rainbows hung through palaces of frozen mist. The music is intensely personal and emotionally inaccessible in one breath. What could be more human?

The third disc consists of four song live set from a Detroit radio station, plus some demo and early versions of songs that appeared elsewhere. Some of these recent versions are wildly varied (crude, even), but really their live set is the key. The wails of guitar, the ebb and flow of the vocals, the elegant simplicity of the compositions, these are the elements that suck me in. Regardless of how nervous these guys always seem about performing live, it is truly the riteless in which they create some of their most effective music. Removed from the safety net of the studio, forced to walk the tightrope, Windy & Carl never fail to deliver the goods. And the pleasures of their work may be classified by some as overly subtle, but hey – we can't all be cowmen. Even in space.

### DANIEL ZAMIR & SATLACH CHILDREN OF ISRAEL TADJIK 127169 CD BY JOHN CRATCHLEY

The third CD from Daniel Zamir and his Satlach trio represents a consolidation of his previous work and an extension of it. The trio, Zamir on soprano and also saxophones, Shmari Ezer Blumenkrantz on bass and Kevin Zubeck on drums, play with unforgiving ability and conviction throughout. These are literally "songs my mother taught me" on Zamir's part. Looking to build on pieces constructed around Jewish folk idioms with a high level of free playing – much in the spirit of John Sam's Masada project – Children Of Israel is sourced from a tape of his mother singing 20 or so popular Jewish songs.

Zamir transcribed these for the trio, augmented at John Sam's suggestion with a saxophone section playing intertwining charts. Bill Laswell, producing and mixing, completes the set-up. The additional songs are supplied by Matt Ehrlich and Ned Rothenberg on alto, Paul Shapiro and Alan Cohen on tenor and Doug Wiselmann on baritone. John Sam also guests on alto. Adding just the right degree of embellishment, the section shores up the trio's integrity without swamping them in sentimentality or cliché.

Zamir is blessed with a crystal tone. Linked to his obvious spiritual resilience, his playing has such positive momentum that it is almost impossible not to get swept up in the emotion of the pieces. Blumenkrantz and Zubeck anticipate every nuance with exhilarating precision. Children Of Israel continues Zamir's flawless trajectory. □

# Avant Rock

Reviewed by David Keenan

## ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE & THE MELTING PARAOISO UFO LIVE IN JAPAN ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE ANTIOX CD

### MAKOTO KAWABATA I'M IN YOUR INNER MOST OCHRE OCHRE351 CD

For a group whose live shows are so routinely jaw-dropping, Acid Mothers Temple have been poorly served by live albums. Earlier this year, *Bele Is the Bird* in the USA 2000 filled the gap—a faded bootleg with a murky sound that gave AMT a punk edge. Live in Japan, however, is the real prize. Recorded straight to 16 track in their hometown of Nagoya, it features the two drum line-ups of Hayato Kuroki and Yoshimatsu Kuroki, the extra lift that the doubled percussion gives the music a closest in effect to the king of temporal elasticity that characterized The Grateful Dead when they were powered by both Bill Krovitz and Mickey Hart. The arcane fidelity gives equal separation to spot-fry guitar, Higuchi's crafty use of janglehammer (Keith Richards comes on in the opening "Cosmic Introduction—United Space") and the way that bassist Tsuguma structures the pieces with melodic lines that point the way like lightning. It's a hardcore set, themed to the backbone of "In It" and "La Nova—Speed Guru," and the one you'll reach for next time you're looking for concerts.

Kawabata's solo set, *I'm In Your Innermost*, was originally available in limited little-cut form on Eclipse Records, and its CD release by Ochre is great news, as it's a key entry in his monstrous back catalog. Essentially it's a reworking of the Kawabata and Audrey Greenest piece, "The Incoherent Light Of The Echoes," that appeared on *Absolutely Freak Out (Zip Your Mind!)*, but here it's extrapolated into the heavens, with Kawabata setting deep concentric circles of real organ and analog electronics into motion, creating a tape of total satisfying minimalism spaces this side of Peggy Nagged himself.

### THE GIRLS LIVE AT THE RATHSKELLER 5.1779

ABARON BOOK COMPANY ABARON007 CD  
The Girls were active on the Boston club scene from 1977-79, but evidence of their brief reign is thin on the ground, with a sole 7", "Jeffrey I Hear You," released during their lifetime on David Thomas's Hearstian label. Now this live album, which catches the group at its musical apex mere months before it imploded, joins the posthumous studio collection *Girls Reunion* in helping to restore some historical balance. Right away it's clear why Thomas went for them: Live Porn Ubu. The Girls are straight out of the avant garage. Synth player Robin Aron, who now plays the keys for Cut De Sex, takes on the Allen Ravenstine role, bleeding frenzied clouds of electronics all over bassist George Condo and guitarist Mark Dagley's messianic riffs. There are some great straightforward blasts of sex, like the 10 second "Just Got Back," but generally the Girls out their riffs with plenty of tight power-pop hooks and an Anglophile's taste for flowery melodies. Looking like Thunderbolt puppets in

shorts, their dark onstage persona is endearing, as is the offbeat humor of their stopgap barker and songs like "Daddy Auto." They must have been quite an anomaly on the Boston scene, as their angular take on teenage was miles away from contemporaries like The Real Kids and The Lyres, the latter of whom they were supporting at the time. But as the sleeve notes point out, Messen O'Burne was only a matter of weeks away, and listening to this now it feels eternally present.

### THE IDITAROD THE RIVER NEKTAR BLUEBANGT RNR071 CD

When it arrived earlier this year, *The Iditarod's* *The Ghost, The Elf, The Cat And The Angel* CD appeared to come out of nowhere—a stunning old folk record that evoked the relevant forms of Sandy Denny and Anne Briggs while simultaneously connecting with much of what was going on beneath the sidewalks of the USA such as the likes of Charalambides and Farsana. Now this reissue of their 1998 debut, completed with a clutch of bonus tracks, shows up to deepen the puzzle. On *The River Nektar* you can clearly hear *The Iditarod* moving towards the inspired synthesis of whispered traditional melodies and crepuscular drones that defines their current soundworld. Yet there's more of a pop sensibility here, albeit one infected with the kind of lapsed art but veiled singlehandedly defined by Calvin Johnson's K Records. The guitarist wails off old, truncated patterns and Carin Wagner's vocals often break as she strains to follow to stately note trails. The subtle use of field recordings give some tracks the feel of accidental photographs of places you barely remember visiting. The bonus stuff is just as interesting. A couple of choice covers help fill when they're broadcasting from. Eric's "The Fat Lady" and Little and Dorcas's gorgeous "The Lullaby of Spring." But best of all are the closing tracks, "Manner," a spectral lullaby haunted by the melody of "Gershwins' Ave," and "Gardner," featuring Wagner's expressive vocals.

### THE MAGIC CARPATHIANS/ SIX ORGANS OF ADMITTANCE/ VIBRACASTRAL ORCHESTRA TRIGHPLANE TERRAFORMS VOLUME ONE MENTAL TELEMETRY TELL008 CD

Three divergent groups share the same airspace on this newly packaged CD. Poland's Magic Carpathians are still exploring the huge empty spaces that opened up on their last Ethnologue release, with Anna Macher's vocals touching on Björk as she prowls around Tomasz Radziuk's obsessive bass patterns, flying "Tusk" with "tusk" for the first time. I can remember seeing Eric B. & Rakim's "Paid In Full." Their second track, "Ultras," adds some curving spurts of ethnic hum, splashing the backdrop with silver. San Francisco's Six Organs of Admittance are as dazzling as ever, pulling an organ and hand percussion headset from some modal, hobbeskater guitar on "Warm Earth." Which I've Been

told". Ben Chasny's hypnotic vocal is enough to let you to sleep, under with a quivering blue drone every bit as beautiful as Max Bolar's. The UK's Vibrocaster's Orchestra are rapidly becoming a great singles group, the shorter format being a perfect vehicle for their urgent blasts of free dancing sound. Here they condense various working strategies into five focused tracks, most of them fading in like bullet trains to the accompaniment of showers of percussion, repetitive electronics and the gull cries of vacuously bowed instruments.

### MASONNA SHOCK ROCK MIDI CREATIVE CO LTD CXCA1166 CD

### CHRISTINE 23 ONNA ACID EATER MIDI CREATIVE CO LTD CXCA1166 CD

### SPACE MACHINE 2 MIDI CREATIVE CO LTD CXCA1167 CD

In 2002 psychedelic noise rocker Maseo Yamazaki celebrated 16 years of creating brain damaging art brut, and to mark the occasion Japanese major MIDI Creative released a trio of recordings, each documenting one of his many alter egos. His best known as Masonna, a noise artist whose shows are configured around an explosive combination of punk performance art and electronics. Shock Rock consists of 31 scattered explosions, ranging from 18 seconds to three minutes, given rock form by Yamazaki's infernal vocals.

Yamazaki describes Christine 23 Onna, the group he shares with guitarist Fusao Toda of Osaka's all-female psych group Angel in Heavy Syrup, as a "space monde psychedelic group," with the heaviest emphasis on the mondo elements. Today plays acid guitar licks that sting like a hangover and wouldn't be out of place in a psychotronics fest scored by David Allen And The Anomies or Klaus Meyer's feverish Carie Nations. Yamazaki, inevitably, brings the noise, singing glory shots of analogic effects that keep the background pulsating like it has just been spiked.

Space Machine is Yamazaki's solo all-analog project, a personal voyage into the sci-fi sounds of early dabblers like the Silver Apples. But here his own soundtracks are closest to Dele Doryshim's worky work with The BBC Radiophonic Workshop, as he brings down thunderbolts of electricity with the twist of a large plastic dial.

### THE ONE ENSEMBLE DANIEL PADDEN THE ONE ENSEMBLE OF DANIEL PADDEN CARISUP PLATE CRPT140 CD

Daniel Padden is the member of Leicester's Volcano The Bear who grounds them in a more solid melodic base, while his fellow cubs have been intent on reconciling the lessons of brain-mangling composers like Bernard Parmegiani with a punk purrative approach. With the launch of The One Ensemble, however, Padden goes to please himself. The resulting disc occupies a liminal, almost-folk landscape vaguely delineated by the

likes of Robert Wyatt, Richard Youngs and, at points, Brian Eno. Padden's main instruments here are piano, cello, voice and a sheath of reeds, and most of the tracks are assembled from accumulating patterns of all four. His piano playing lies somewhere between The Residents and Alex Von Schlippenbach, albeit filtered through minimalist technique. His recording makes the instrumental sound like a cartoon, with each prospecting slab echoing a bong from its inwards. Although some tracks feel like tail runs, "Tremant Krings" brings all the discs dancing around his brain into an epic form, moving from a nest of ebos to an elegiac vocal denouement shadowed by some tactile free cells.

### TRÄD GRÄS OCH STENAR AJN SCHJAVIN DRAJ SILJENCE SJSJ316 CD

Formed in Sweden in the late 80s, Träd Gräs Och Stenar, literally "Tree Grass And Stones," was a rockist act seconded in the marks of International Noise where took that group's experiments in building form from static and added populative drums, folk melodies and acid guitar in a way that unwittingly shadowed the Prog punk minimalism of many a heavy Krautrock outfit. What made Träd Gräs Och Stenar stand out from a thousand moustaches was the way their beehemoth rhythm section always sounded like it was wading through an act as it attempted to catch up with the front line. On *Ajn Schjavin Draj*, their first new album in several decades, those zombie rhythms remain intact, along with their penchant for garbly fuzz guitar. Although much of it is dominated by a slightly toothy sound, culminating in "The Dove", a surfer that could pass as U2 in a blindfold test, for the most part it effectively conveys an "edge of the world" oneness for our boys to slowly rumble through. On the great "Everyone's Sleeping", roiling rhythms suggest monstrous vocals that rise like smoke signals. But recombining the raw feedback terror takes on The Fugis' rickrack "Nothing", the highlights here are their impressed instrumentals, such as the 12 minute psychedelic blow-out "Bragging", which should secure a booking at next year's Tarnestock.

### MATTHEW VALENTINE TONIGHT ONE NIGHT ONLY! MV & EE IN HEAVEN TIME LAG 004 LP

Matthew Valentine was the brains and guts behind New York's Tower Records, a sprawling multi-head collective whose apocryphal Folk Scene record defined a moment in time as beautifully as The Incoherent Light Of David's The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter. Since then Valentine has restricted his output to the occasional hand-assembled CD epistle smuggled out via his own Chick Of Microtones label. Tonight One Night Only! is a vinyl repress of one of those limited CDs and comes in a gorgeous card gatefold, complete with a booklet of Valentine's eccentric prose. Joined by his partner Enka Dera, the duo play elongated folk doses across a series of chunky authentic instrumentation, from ukulele and autoharp through Jigs Fahey-like acoustic and wheezing harmonium. □

# Critical Beats

Reviewed by Philip Sherburne

## AARDVARCK

CULT COPY  
NUSCH HOUT NH0001 12"

## AARDVARCK

DONKEYBOY  
MUSIC FOR SPEAKERS MAS16P 12"

On "Cult Copy," our man in Amsterdam draws a wall-sized, single frame graphic novel where the sky's the colour of lead, steamramps leak black light and the chandeliers breathe out aluminum gusts. The chords are epic in the way of the best Detroit Techno, but beneath it all machine rhythms grind on into eternity. If this track isn't enough to convince you that Aardvarck, aka Mike Kivits, isn't the best thing to happen to rebusnik Techno since Urban Ties, his Donkeyboy EP will. Perpetually sliding rhythms seem unable to get a fix on the downbeat as they slip dangerously towards the precipice. Breakbeats flail with abandon, but narrative keyboards keep a cool head. On "Man To Keys," the astrophobic Haze Pattersen of Aardvarck's shouldering, half-time Techno with slowest down vocals that sound stuck in some time-warped, dragging you down into a tangle of molten soul.

## DABRYE

PAYBACK  
GHOSITY INTERNATIONAL G112 12"

Dabrye, aka Tadd Mullins, moved rather quickly from the brittle-boned, stained-glass skinned states of his first Ghosity EP to the much more animated, full bodied funk of his latest EP for Prefuse 73's Eastern Developments label. Now it's payback time for Ghosity with "Making It Pay," a stuttering, glitching instrumental HipHop track that projects Dabrye skipping CDs through a particle accelerator of breakbeats and bass. The sentimental "Hyped-Up Plus Fun" (Output Music Remix) sandblasts icy chords with a steady stream of static and quip, metallic blaster Preslows 73 himself takes to the floor for a megamix. Dabrye's lines are moments, grabbing target plastic seascape, spicing bass and bright, busy chords into a skidding tour of lachrymosest postmodernism.

## DEEPART

SNAPSHOTS COMPILATION  
DELFIN 360GR CDXK12"

Andi Hart has been playing his brand of dulcet Techno beats and echo chamber ambience for nearly a decade now. After spending a number of those years turning out Chain Reaction-styled horizontal House, he's finally moved into a category all his own, programming leadenest electro and curiously thin synth lines into a strange new take on IDM: intentionally Debilitated Music. Not that it's bad — it's just that, compared to most dance music's steadfast streamlining, Deepart's parts feel bound together with seltzer, with all the rough edges jutting out. There's no identity crisis here. Drum machines are not afraid to be drum machines, synthesizers embrace their own syntheticity, and even the odd guitar plinks along with all the well-rounded presumption of The Dancin' Columns. The result is a kind of folkish, art but take on techno.

## DEL DONGO

SAMISCESSION  
F-COMMUNICATIONS F166 12"

Newcomer Del Dongo, the Parisian duo of Marc Sauvage and Sami Aou-Hadar, do some heavy lifting on two long five tracks, fading massive, slithering rhythmic beats together like a real-time display of seismic activity. On the 12 minute "Dusseldorf," they set up a few rave stab stomps before laying waste to them with pumping, off-time drum 'n' bass rhythms. By minute two they've rushed to the climax, where they draw out for the duration of the track, gilling on layers of percussion and torching the pyre with a steady organ flame. Slightly sprightly, "Samsicession" offsets a highstepping House bassline and almost ska-like, chivva-chivva rhythms with the lamentations of machines being goaded into doing things they obviously find highly objectionable. The sound throughout is cavernously murky, as though recorded at some air hangar rave.

## HARCO PRON

SKIPO EP  
MUSIC FOR SPEAKERS MAS16P 12"

Dis be forewarned: every one of the nine tracks on limbohead newcomer Harco Pron's debut EP begs to be played out, but at only a minute or two apiece, they don't leave you much time for finding an adequate follow-up for their squiggly, minimalist funk. Slinky as question marks, Pron's gigolo, to-funk side into your consciousness like insidious, libidinous enticements, trailing tracks of D'Angelo, Prince and Cypress in their wake. Melting pop pulses dribble through cheeseholes, while the drum tracks sound phased in through its ears and string, and the guitars are coiled in caustic residue. Still, for all its wooden gramophone aspect, the record's almost comically funny, a swanboat of Sufist sex, Gaseo jazz, 60 second slow jams and fingerpicks capable of triggering atomic reactions. Let's catch the bus and buy him an attention span, so he can catch the four minute epic we deserve.

## KING HONEY FEATURING CHIEF KAMACHI, HEZEKIAH AND GOS

TRINITY  
SOUND INC SK0009 12"

MF Doom collaborator King Honey teams up with Chief Kamachi, Hezekiah and Gos for a biblically favoured rat-tat-tat-rhythm spray that aims to "rush the party like a beehive." Whipping up verses filled with beasts, the quad claim that "with these musical coils we made these streets run," and appropriately enough, King Honey's productions poke holes through a sea of harmonium braided with North African trills, breakbeats shuffling forward and backward like a loom. Heat Sensor gives us the Prefuse treatment, putting a pastel wash over the original's bestial drive, while DJ/Rupture looms on the fact forward bottom, hyperbolic the drum beats and setting the dial with an ominously rotating bass figure. King Honey's own "Oedipine" mix is just like it sounds: a Q-tip dipped in bleach and plunged deep.

## LUCIANO

LIVE @ WEETAMIX  
MAX ERNST MAC022 CD

On this live recording from Geneva's Weetamix club, for Thomas Brinkmann's Max.Ernst label, the Chilean-born Swiss resident Luciano shows an increasingly knotty sensibility (he has previously put up records on Perlon, Klang and Mental Groove), wrapping up Autotech's accidental syncretisms in gauzy layers of ping-pong, ticks, whirrs, piano chimes, sassy humming and modern buzz. Ragged rhythm figures tear through the speaker cones, snare heads explode in corset and bass is treated like a clay pilota, beaten mercilessly with sticks and emitting dull thuds. Namely Techno, Luciano's mix is way too squintily fit to the definition comfortably. Blending Latin shuffle, glitch glitch and Microhouse's cool pulse, it's a hipbook essay on rhythm as a folkie textbook.

## ERLEND ØYE

SYMPHONY OF DISFACE  
SOURCE SOURCE02928 12"

MR VELCRO FASTENER  
HELPOPOVICHY EP  
ELECTRO ETR00X11 12"

Who would think that beneath King Of Convenience Erlend Øye's Impid Simon & Garfunkel cover lurked an actual mix to funk? Well, that's not totally true. The Norwegian singer-songwriter sounds as Prince-gone as on any of The King's hard as a gumdrop folk-pop. But in enlisting Mr Velcro Fastener (Finland's late Metsatuntti and Tatu Peltanen), he's forced for the first time into actual dance music. The Velcro's springy arpeggios turn out to be the perfect complement for Øye's tickle-tonic vocals. Far from the hook and eye conceit of their name, everything here is rubber and copper, pure conductivity. On their single for Electra, "1st Of November" offers the standard lures and loose knots, but "Spander" is something else entirely — broken elated that even Rumi Friedman and Russ Gabriel alike could pop and lock to, syncretized to the breaking point and coloured antitoxin blue.

## PEST

JEFFERSON SHUFFLE  
NEXIA TUNE ZEN10123 10"

It might be a bit of a stretch, but you could compare Pest's raucous two-tracker to Thomas Hirschorn's recent installation, CavernaMan, at New York's Barbara Gladstone gallery. The Hirschorn piece transforms cardboard and duct tape into a cavernous labyrinth filled with fake rocks, empty beer cans, Pamela Anderson prunks and tests of political philosophy, all wired with tinfoil slacks of dynamite. It's all very endtimes, and so is Pest's messy antitoxin romp, though here it's pop music, not Western culture, that's about to blow. Country, rock, funk, disco, HipHop and videogame soundtracks all get tossed into the pit, where they hang helplessly from ceilings and stalactites, brushing your face as you feel your way blindly through the maze. It's like a subterranean version of Big Bear 2.0, though

it's tough to see the tongue in Pest's cheek as they party like it's 1999.

## SHINTO

KIBOU EP  
PLAYHOUSE PLH000024 12"

Sounding like a Japanese Tom 26, throat swollen and clogged with buckwheat honey, Shinto fronts these four tracks of rough, melodic electronics produced by Hane Platzgummer. Their last album, Shonen A, chronicled the exploits of a 14 year old serial killer, and while there are no translations to clue in the listener here, it's not hard to imagine Shinto's growling warble naming tales of back alley shenanigans and underworld decadence. Platzgummer, formerly of NYC rockers HP Zener and more recently known for perverse electronics on Cheap and Deiko II, makes the perfect collaborator for such gooey pulp electro, a lend of class tribute to Tom Waits and Raymond Scott. An element of the Bionan musical hangs over the music, even this disc, with the exception of the brooding, ominous "Gorikara," it's all based on lumbering breakbeats, rapid syncretisms and gristly orchestral excursions. "Amakush" is the standout, leaving Shinto's digmy monstrosity over peaky funk guitar, staccato accordions and the cheapest drum machine of the year.

## SOULPHICTION

MANMADE SCIENCE  
PERLON PERL04 12"

Michael Baumann, aka Jackmate, Suptone and Soulphiction, has recorded for all the usual suspects of MicroHouse (Perlon, Playhouse, Powerflex, etc), but here he forges Perlon's typically rhythmicale, pointillist blur in favour of a much bigger band of mudruff slap, splattered with grit and icy vocals. The hiccoughing "Lackofish" howls closest to the label's habit of amillaging the marching drills of army ants, all drumming knuckles and gnashing fangs. "The Drown," clouded with chords bled from Radiohead's smoggy skies, features a vocal that may be saving something about breaths and Kurtis Blow. "Get It Right" musically does, and twice: both versions are weirdly dunky houses of cards propped up with the Queen of Bantled Baskets, the Jack of Jack-Tracks and the Ace of Busted Subwoofers. Then a soulful voice and a wisp of saxophone give all huffy, and it all tumbles down in a pile of bruised drum heads.

## VELOCETTE

POTBOLTER EP  
PARALLEL PR0104 12"

Jason Williams is on a mission to put the downbeat in its proper place, and on the most recent instalment of 'Jack' tracks from the library of Babylon for his Parallel label, he does just that in masterly style. "Potboller" rides a dance buggy through DBA's skeletal tracks, shooting chattering aluminum drums over the grimy ACU baseline. "Tup" and "Tishitup" give similarly gawky, the former tacks through a scrippage of BOB's while an only slightly gaudier drenches the bruise-colored sky, and the latter Medlocks the remnants of "Potboller" to the safety of Detroit Techno's cool, bandaged bliss. □

# Electronica

Reviewed by Ken Hollings

## ARBOL

ARBOL  
INDUS BOMBA INB00002 CD

The emergence of audiovisual data streaming finds yet another phantom counterpart in the first solo project by ex-Piano Magic member Miguel Marni, a collection of 15 highly suggestive soundtracks in search of accompanying imagery. Never has the term "evocative" implied so much that is absent, nor has nobility ever seemed so important. Marni's opener is a brisk scurry through "Bikes And Kazzes", followed by the mounting incursion flow of "Razoul", with dissonant comments about cars, boats and fear delivered with stony-eyed directness by Sisy Wangelen from Manchester's George. Elsewhere, melodies and voices keep steady pace with one another over shards of flashing electronics on "Amblent And Love".

## BATTERY OPERATED CHASES THROUGH NON-PLACE MIXERMAN CD

Experimental sound group Tonkiz and Wade Walker have created an intriguing audio world of what Marc Auge has termed "non places" spaces which have no structural or historical residue. The recorded and monitored flow to be discovered in airport departure lounges, railway stations, hotel lobbies, leisure parks, fast food restaurants and large retail outlets are, Auge argues, "a real measure of our time". Battery Operated have made DAT recordings at eight such non places, identified on the CD only by a tiny photographic detail taken at each site, then programmed the material into electrostatic rhythmic expressions of what they describe as "sonic architecture". To link such explorations to the chaotic undulating momentum of the chase, a classically dispersed exploration of cinematic spots, makes for aspired if unsettling listening.

## BOVINE LIFE +VS KOMET RECIPROSCOP +VS 01 BIP NBP BLES010 CD

When it's time for making your third cd, there's nothing like allowing biology and strategy to get a little jiggly with each other. But what happens when Chris Dogks, responsible for meaty live electronics as Bovine Life, starts exchanging MP3s in a collaborative project with Frank Betschneider, who has been releasing sparsely rhythmic codes as Komet since 1995? "Would I either discipline myself or disease Frank?" Decisive wonders in his accompanying notes. The result is a finely graded extension of order into chaos and vice versa over a selection of solo tracks, remixes and joint compositions.

## MORGAN CANEY & KAMAL JOORY MAGIC RADIOS CITY CENTRE OFFICES TOWERBLOCK0002 CD

DENZEL + HUON  
TIME IS A GOOD THING  
CITY CENTRE OFFICES TOWERBLOCK0002 CD

Quietly sardonic through the gradual collapse of harmony and the neatly organised structuring of sound, these two releases from Berlin label video

Centre Offices make great play of dualities. Caney and Joory blend studio smarts with passive erotica, as exemplified by the stretched durations and suspensions of "Blanket" and the compressed "Vibes of Boring" and its reworking "Vibes". Having originally worked with members of Jo Rococo Rock and Tawelaw, Bertarm Denzel and Eric Huon take small looped segments down from acoustic recordings and build them into impressive constructions. Apart from the spightly luminousness of their "Rebirthscape", however, both collections tend towards the moodily downtempo, which can have its limitations.

## D'ARANGELO BROKEN TOYS' CORNER REFLEX CAT 127 CD

On the sequel to their 1999 Reptiles release, Shipweck, Rome-based brothers Marco and Fabrizio D'Arangelo create an expansive all-embracing sound that is both evocative and finely tuned in its attention to detail. Looser and more elastic than their previous Monomorph recordings, these compositions have replaced fragility with a shyness, much warmer sense of control. Tracks like "Mistum 77" have a slow head to them, but it's the busy complexities of "All That I" and the springy electro of "Sea Ride" that take you in the furthest. Broken Toys being, of course, the ones that engage our sympathies most, it should be interesting to see what D'Arangelo get to play with next.

## EIGHT FROZEN MODULES THOUGHT PROCESS DISORDER ORTHOLONG MUSIKOR ORTHO 10 CD

Busting a harsh and dirty mood, Ken Gibson's grizzled, crawling side project is turned loose to run naked and screaming through the supermarket leading zone before spontaneously falling to pieces right in front of you. Strange how the polymorphously perverse always fragments itself into parodies, whether biological, conceptual or technical: a bass line here, a torn lesion of sound there. The ruptured gyrator of data spraying over disoriented breakpoints on "Charmosa Of The Brain" and the slowly expanding sonic fatulence of "Institutionalizing The Scatterbrain" say it all, really. But if you know of a better hole, by all means go to it.

## EPLY -AHEAD OF THE WAY 2ND REC 2ND007 CD

Having operated over the past five years as a figurehead of the Craft/Savage media merge, the Epy collective move into the terrain of the new digital disc with the firm intention of moving a few changes. Now a five piece, they create very sensual funk out of miniature moments of rock that hook up directly with the listener's nervous system. This is the programming of dance music in all its variables understood at the most molecular level, as software created out of the interaction between brain and body. Capable of generating real time videos to accommodate their beats, Epy have

not only seen the future, they have also built the most fabulous dancefloor there.

## TERENCE FIXMER AKTION MEKANIK MUSICMAN MM0021 CD

Rubbing baby oil purposefully on his chest, International Digital Digito Terence Fixmer has brought together some of the best modern body beats from the post-punk era. By reducing their tectonic element to the simplest exposed blop, Techno and Acid House pushed traditional group dynamics down towards absolute zero, thereby separating themselves from their more industrial predecessors. With a reassessment of the possibilities for vocal content well underway, getting back to source with the likes of Crash Course In Science, No More and The Klinik makes a great deal of sense. Meanwhile, Fixmer's own "Aktion Mekanik Theme" is a piece of audio noir wear, and Daniel Miller's despatch tribute to JD Ballard on "Warm Leatherstock" has never sounded better.

## HYPO KARAOKE A CAPELLA ACTIVE SUBSUNO AHS CD

Normally an album that includes a title like "What About Fish" is well worth avoiding, but when this is followed by something called "Lacrimusmaylike", it's usually not a bad idea to hang around a little while longer just to see what's happening. Hypo and his friends make a messed up, agreeable sound, full of dets and splashes and curly intentions. Dweat, however, there's too conventional a sense of what's old to hang here for it to really get the attention. Nothing, for example, that quite matches up to the picture of a young Souleise Sax and Jordan looking thoroughly fed up with each other down the Ray that is reproduced in the CD's accompanying booklet. Comes on like The Osbourne, but ends up like The Osmonds.

## T RAUMSCHMIERE THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SWINDLE SHITKAPUT STREK020 CD

Sounding alarmingly more like The Glitter Band striking a defiant pose than The Sex Pistols indulging in conceptual pop historicism, this selection of bass bin rants previously available on 12" vinyl from Berlin-based Marco Haas has a dark brilliance all its own. Agitprop sentiments, surly attitudes, brutally minimalist beats, together with a slip track by his previous album, make this the perfect teenage rock stomper in every sense of the word. Quoting from press releases is undoubtedly the lowest form of wit, but the closing statement should really belong to Shitkaput's copywriter. It's about a guy who's rocked all night to dawn, lying in his bed, enjoying the last puff of his sporty cig.

## RYO CO LO-FI GRADATION NELANDER NELL001 CD

A slice of psychedelic after-school heaven courtesy of the consoles and magic machines of an

anonymous Japanese collective who give it up to The Moons, Tokyo, Karen Rider and Doramen in their freestyle sleeveless. Packaged in a 17" poly bag loaded with hallucinogenic, candy-colored artwork, this double CD package represents the heavily mutated sounds and images from the next generation of Tokyo Club Pop. Dense fractal collages of pop, cartoon dialogue, asymmetric digital loops are combined in a set of despatched nursery rhymes for those who had too much to drink last night. And don't be fooled by whimsical titles like "MuffinSunday" and "Kitty Kitchen Theme": you definitely don't want these people living in your head.

## SMYGLISSA WE CAN FIX IT VERTICAL FORM VFORM005 CD

Although Henrik Johansson may have put together this collection of rhythmic workouts unaided, it sounds as if Herbert and Gretchen Vogel have channelled themselves into his laptop to add a helping hand. Maybe they're ones who are going to fix it in the title. Beats nicket and twang about, melodies shrug their shoulders and wander off the whole affair has the feel of a technological table-topping session in which every effort has been made to contact the living. That said, there's still plenty to enjoy here, especially on the old-kicker "Blingular Gains" and the didactic "Work Shall Be Abolished".

## SOGAR STENGEL LIST L2 CD

Filled with the delicate scintillation of sounds that appear to have been pulled directly from the ether, Jürgen Hecker's sequel to Basel, his debut album released on Taylor Decker's 12k label, manages to weave an evanescent tissue into the dense circuitry of the past. This is music as fabric, a tissue of tiny threads woven intricately together, kept achingly alive by virtue of the microscopic forces and tensions crossing backwards and forwards through each stitch. Structure is revealed as an endless series of individual pulses and trajectories streak inside the moment. The first electronic circuitulators were derived from the automated mechanics of the industrial loom. Listen carefully and you can hear them at work here.

## NAD SPIRO FIGHTCLUBBING GEOMETRIK MESSAGE GR M04 01 CD

Under an ambivalent alias, Barcelona's Rosa Amst opens dark electronic cauldrons in which psychological dramas unfold. As a series of aggressive reflections on the passive acceptance of our culture's more violent encryptions, ranging from John Boorman's *Poet* Blank to Iggy Pop's *The Idiot* via Brad Pitt's *Stinking buff* and Emma Peel in *Atom Age* culture, this is one creeping study in paranoia that doesn't know its strength. Not surprisingly Amst recently collaborated on a production project with Kim Gaccone, who is not only the founder of Silent Records but also sound designer for David Lynch. □

# HipHop

Reviewed by Hua Hsu

## BEANS MUTESCREAMER/PHREEK THE BEAT WARP NALP100 12"

It's a heavy, sludgy sort of beat, being "the weed one" in one of HipHop's truly weird trio, but Beans has always worn the Mohawk well. With Anti-Pop Consortium now a what-if, perhaps the pesky Beans will truly unveil his freak flag. The lead single from his solo debut, *Tomorrow Right Now*, is a marvelously tough coming out party with all the mystery and play that made A-PC one of the late 90s' most compelling rap acts. On "Phreak The Beat" he brags about being "allegic to conformity" and brings four-dimensional sight before enacting *Smiley's* "The New Wave Vandal... perfect like family portraits on your living-room mantle." "Mutescreamer" is a B-boy pursuit from the outer limits as Beans shouts, "Yob-Ski! Ready to rock!", and claims to be as "effortless as a pebble in your shoe".

## DPZ TURN OF THE MATERIAL LANDSCAPE PROMO CD

Shorn of their more radioactive Dead Prez material, Roni's main Stormtrooper M-1 return with their "RPG" ("The Revolution But Gungaher") scripp. Posing the same questions, or perhaps inspired by the same dubious consciousness, as Mike Ladd's *Majesticons* project and the Bay Area's *The Coup*, DPZ wonder if inattention can be as crunk as Three 6 Mafia or DJ Mm. Of course, this is an aesthetic dilemma as old as the ages, and DPZ are about as successful as just about everyone else who has wandered down the same path, is not very. While "Turn Of The Radio" perfectly fuses the funk with rubble rousing intensity, the *Kaliyah* and *Blaze* remakes are pretty funny and the chart on "Hi Me, Hi Me" ("Magic Johnson? We need about 500 thousand/Hi me, hi me, hi me/Or *Fluoride*/Help us build a hospital?") is surely a future *Kid660*-style punkster sample, most of the album feels like a misreading of Funkadelic's "Free your mind and your ass will follow" main. They seem to think that by repeating "revolution" ad infinitum the kids can hip to Kwame Nnamah and Bobby Seale by osmosis. Instead, you just want them to stop banging the drum and talk about pussy or their cars. Never thought it'd be joining for Project Pat. (Peter Shapiro)

## EMINEM LOSE YOURSELF INTERSCOPE 10841 12"

"Lose Yourself" is the perfect pre-game, prevalence fight song to enjoy while we-paunting your face and fantasizing about all the stray teeth you'll collect by night's end. Its quiet-loud-quiet progression and staccato, tapping guitars make it a rap "Eye Of The Tiger," with sudden thespian *Eminem* playing the survivor's role: "You better lose yourself in the music/The moment/You own it, you better never let go." (For the stay at home sluggers dodging out armchair procs, dock points for Emin's played-out reference to one of rock's most tried bugaboos, "The New World Order.") Its oddly subtle but, just as Emin

himself gets kicked into the mainstream, this single carries all the palatial rebellious attributes—straight-forward, name-calling and angry but still safe—of the most biting, croaky rap. Whether or not Eminem's anger is manufactured, it's still a surprisingly powerful song about passion and discipline, and there are few songs about either subject in any genre nowadays.

## GANG STARR SKILLS WGNV 7243638849 12"

Just when the over-mimicked DJ Premier was beginning to sound like a lazy admirer of his former self, he returns with "Skills," a good, concise single that's notable for its departure from the top and true Gang Starr sound. Built on coy and sex aesthetics—a murky, guilty bassline and plenty of metallic shoen—Premier's beat sounds continually at risk of falling apart and behind. Though the song itself sounds like one long loop of an introduction, it's an interesting turn and one that bodes well for The Owner, the duo's sixth album. Of course, Gang still sounds the same ("The All Stars," as he likes to say) and, of course, when he smirks "skills" and, of course, when he smirks "skills" he chooses the words like he has a cold. But it's a chemistry thing that has yet to fall after a decade during which nearly everything else did.

## LITTLE BROther LIGHT IT UP ABB RECORDS ABBE181 12"

Part of the reason for independent HipHop's onus is that it sees its problem in terms of resource rather than resourcefulness. When innovation becomes one's ability to outbid all corners for untapped loops, it's understandable why HipHop production is wondering aloud what synths, keyboards and live groups can offer. From the land of Glaxo and Jimmy V come North Carolinians Little Brother, and their solution is refreshing in its simplicity: reclaim one of pop music's most recognizable riffs—Al Green's "I'm So Into Love With You"—and trigger it every which way but boring, looking the steps of Green's splendid horn refrain and reimagining the chaos. Nicolai's joyous beat feels both familiar and foreign. LB's slyest rappers fail to distinguish, but punchline-oriented Phonte gets in a few good pop-culture hits ("Radio heads download! my shit to OK computers"). "Flying High" carries the requisite, "We're a North Carolina band/underdogs as LBJ trades verses about coming up moments in such an obscure state: 'Remember when y'all didn't give a fuck like we was chashy wazs'."

## THE MAJESTICONS PIRANHA FADER/FADER PARTY BIG DADA B0046 12"

The *Majesticons*' debut album, *Beauty Party*, is a side project of a side project from an artist who himself sometimes seems like a side project. When we last heard from The *Majesticons*, the no-goodies were joining with Mike Ladd's *Majesticons* for both the soul of HipHop and the

lucidity of their creator. Ladd has always been one of rap's most eccentric figures and his 1999 *Gun Ain't Road* record was a charming indictment of rap excess that was its raucous-sound heart of rap itself, imitative slave. Voices in his head or not, Ladd's *Majesticons* are decadent the decadent-encouraged earnings lagging suggestively perfected avatars, "Phreatic Party" sums up the *Majesticons*: "We're gonna bite you, then eat you alive!" It's supposed to be a joke, but Ladd and friends rap with such conviction and wit that it's hard to be sure until they launch into one after the top into generalization chorus: "We'll buy you out/Or kick you out/Bear down your house/It's condos now." "Fader Party" is a song about coke, Escalades and "platinum drawers", and Ladd sounds like he's at the end of his rope. Sometimes anger inspires and sometimes it just makes you plain crazy.

## THE NEXTMEN SELECTED MIXES (THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR) SNOBNOX SC00399 CD

There's little academic about The Nextmen's sound or approach: it preys on supply, jazz loops and studiously mimics the heavy, jazz bombast of vintage *Pete Rock*. This collection of slick, walkmanlike remakes and one-off collaborations surrounds where The Nextmen's scattered debut, *Moving Amongst* the Madness, occasionally stunted. Their rising, uptown version of Groove Armada and Jaz's "Sun Touch" skews the unfortunate broken beat scene, returning from its acid jazz precocity at the last possible moment and showing that The Nextmen are as good at sequencing and programming as they are at digging. New York's buttery *Gap* Lava adds the duo to two of their finest moments, the buoyant "Thinking Man's Session" and the swaggering, guitar-powered "Break The Mule," which surprisingly isn't about Hester Da. The only problem is that the Nextmen all-leveling, "good but rarely great" aesthetics makes nearly every rapper on the record sound the same, but maybe that's not really their problem.

## NOBODY BALLOTTETES (GROOP GROOVE #1) UBIQUITY UR102 12"

His official: everyone loves Streetball! Busta Rhymes leaped them, Automator remixed them and Common and The Neptunes spilled it out once and forever, confessing their shared crush and collaborating with Lactica Sadler on Common's forthcoming *Electric Circus*. Nobody's obsession has been evident for years, and his recent single plays direct homage to the group that made Moogs and socialism safe for the underground. "Ballotettes" chugs along effectively with a German-sounding bassline, Farfisk blunts and unapologetically HipHop drums. He loquaces in the brilliant last two minutes, cooing bloody angers and synths to people together while the beat is on the B-side, "Images Of April," plus Nobody with his live backing group, Los Angeles space rockers

Languts. It also marks the first time I know of that a HipHop producer covers, let alone references or samples, original airtight folkies *Pearls Before Swine*. Unimagined Languts' vocals in a drench of nature sounds, echoing blood and beauty feedback. "Images Of April" is every bit as odd as the original, but with the staidness of DJ Shadow-like marching drums. Next up: The West Coast All-Stars versus The West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band.

## ERICK SERMON FEATURING REDMAN REACT J RECORDS 21221 12"

It's one thing to deal with *Ortiz* and *Fats* in real life; it's a whole different thing getting shingled in the more progressive, talented circles of HipHop. After Next's "Oochie Welly" and "Truth Hurts" *Adams* raised Middle East (by way of Gong) and Bollywood motifs, respectively, ever-improving producer *Redman* brings with the bestard child of the two. With a galloping rhythm, bendy strings and *Max-Axis* snailshaker flourishes, "React" is the kind of trans-ethnic, British caricature of a hit you feel real good for enjoying. "Whatever she said then it's that/If this she rocks the jaw then react." Sermon grows after the song's compressed vocal sample ends in some unknown tongue. Redman appears in the mix of time to speak the virtues of *Gap's* Game Nig, and though he's funny as usual, he can't salvage a cliché gone bad.

## VARIOUS SUPER RAP LANDSCAPE/PALM LSR111 CD/2XLP

Super Rap is the perfect complement to the "play it safe" old school retrospectives that trace rap's genesis through statelets like Grandmaster Flash or the Sugarhill label. Back when rap was still growing into its uncertain bristles, producers Peter Brown and Patrick Adams cut # some raw scene singles that not only just dusted and went the music (and people) could be. Fly Guy's "Fly Guy Rap" is an anti-dig song where everyone sounds outraged out of their minds, from the most-nothing star on down to the turn-of-the-century back-up singers. The bizarrely named *Majors* lost Out Crew's "Death Rap," a snaky, bass-filled dancefloor number that's charmingly uncoordinated. Like a seriously randy *Diana* and *Marilyn*—or *Chari* and *Ghostface*—Side *Carl* and *Rhaphanock* rock each other a clappy, roughgated approximation of Chick's "Good Times" on their "Rhaphanock Blue." Despite his able brags, *Ty* Rainey's version on "Ticky Tee Rap" is an almost an afterthought as whistles, percussion and a whole mess of space travel sound effects take the loss. The kitchen sink approach of "Ticky Tee" makes it one of the comp's most surreal cuts, and it finds Brown and Adams testing out the sundry effects they'll later earn for more disciplined, equally spaced-out singles like *Cloud Nine*'s "Patty Duke" or *Nas*'s typically off-beat "Sweet Noam Rap." Essential for anyone who finds revolution in the rough, unfinished but doubtlessly inspired. (C)

# Jazz & Improv

Reviewed by Julian Cowley

## THE ABSTRACTIONS SONIC CONSPIRACY EDGESTONE 6874412 CD

Saxophonist Rito Remo can blow smooth but gravitates to blowing raw Ernesto Dos-Infante is an underestimatingly steady presence on guitar and piano. Together they form the hub of the Abstractions, a free playing group that alternates between cautiously sculpted shapes and ferocious eruptions on the borders of unreason. Scott Looney plays percussive clatters and fumes. Bob Marsh caws his wails or dials and chirps on vibes. The defining presence however is Jesse Quatro whose outdoor vocalising, cut through with wails and sylvanistic muttering, hones the music's edge and sets its sound apart.

## BRIURE CHANTS RUPESTRES AMBIANCES MAGNETOUSTES AM597 CD

Drummer Michel Collé's group Briure on this occasion features notable Normand Guilbault, tenorist Martin Lelièvre and Jean Desroche playing baritone sax. Chants Rupestres is a poetic meditation upon cave paintings and the visual art of prehistory, with musings upon the qualities of prehistoric music. This is no precious quest for authentic sounds; rather the improvisations express raw 'primitive' imagery is lodged within the imaginations of the four musicians. Jazz subtleties seep through stylised brain rhythms and sporadic raw squeal. The obvious pitfalls of such a project are avoided. The album's subtly integrated contribution, as effective as it is unobtrusive, is particularly impressive.

## VIV CORRINGHAM VOCAL STROLLS BLUE CAMEL 001 CD

## VIV CORRINGHAM & RICK WILSON GLIMPSES OF RECOGNITION THIRD FORCE 17002 CD

Local Streets, in effect, shares pages from an audio journal, non-verbal jottings from locations that range from a London construction site to St Paul's Cathedral to the Tate Modern, from Brighton beach to the streets of Sierra to Shanghai in a downpour. Environmental sounds surround vocalists Corringham's discreet musical commentary. Her quiet responses to what she is experiencing with all her senses, a pinpoints gloss upon public places. On Glimpses Of Recognition Corringham projects moodily estradropicals of song forms against brooding scores of percussive and electronic sound generated by Rick Wilson. The album is dedicated to the memory of St Healt's Gareth Williams and there are distinct suggestions of that group's influence in this music's atmospheric edginess. Eastern Mediterranean vocal touches ventrilo into a somber ambience that tilts at times towards menace and gloom.

## THE COSMOSMATICES II BOWHOLDER BSH4338 CD

The cosmic logic of Curtis Landy's double bass across the expanse of this album conjures images of Elmgreen's "Jack The Bear" captured into Sun

Ra's outer spaceways. Landy's an inspired and characterful replacement for William Parker, who appeared on the group's debut. Drummer Jay Rosen is magnificently shrewd, making interstellar time, radiating celestial symbol splash. The twin voices of Sonny Simmons on alto and English horn and Michael Marcus on tenor, soprano, bass clarinet and flute project trajectories through the rhythmic web.

## KEN FILIANO SUBVERIVE 9 WINDS 0229 CD

Filiano, in effect the 9 Winds house bassist, has not always fared well in the recording and production process. The solo album Subverive offers an overdue opportunity to hear his beautifully rounded sound in close-up and without distraction. Memorable showstoppers for double bass alone have usually exhibited daring and innovation. Filiano is a considerable technician and not averse to effects, as the electronics on "Non Sequitur" testify, but his musicality is grounded in a rich tone and lyrical leanings rather than outlandish risk taking.

## GEORGE HASLAM & PAUL HESSION PENDLE HAWK CARAPACE SLAM 519 CD

Paul Hession is a pugacious drummer, always bustling and jostling and elbowing for space. That makes him an ideal musical partner for George Haslam, the reedman's characteristic brassy lurch on baritone saxophone and Hungarian tangos has an off-centre sway that makes perfect sense against the barrage of Hession's rapid riffs, converging and intersecting from all quarters of his kit, interspersed with groupings of quiet hushes. Even on the more strangled, faltered-toned passages, Haslam manages to swagger and bagg dog humorously while the drummer cuts at and around him.

## JOANNE HÉTU & JEAN DÉROME LA VIE, CEST SIMPLE AMBIANCES MAGNETOUSTES AM599 CD

Canadian Hétu and Dérôme bring their alto saxophones and voices to the party. Their duo act is an exercise in valuated artlessness, making music their childlike in its simplicity, delivered with a mischievous smirk. The album actually features rarely in any recognisable form. Dérôme's weedy little wind instruments are more an index of the sound, a nod upon the toy box. There's wit and some sophistication in the lyrics of their songs; measured crankiness is the norm for their playing. Assumed raucous has its charms, but experienced at length on La Vie, C'est Simple they are quite thinly spread.

## JARRETT/PEACOCK/ DEJOHNETTE ALWAYS LET ME GO BOCA 19031 2XCD

The cramped urgency to Keith Jarrett's playing during the opening few minutes of Always Let Me Go suggests the pianist is about to lead his trio along an unfamiliar track, but the trademark litig

flow soon materialises and a grand sweep of melodic invention follows. The musicianship is predictably impeccable; mood and dynamics change and there are some unexpected stylistic twists, but Jarrett's musical language sets the agenda, and bassist Gary Peacock and drummer Jack DeJohnette are perfectly attuned to its terms and idiosyncrasies. The set was recorded in April 2001 in Kyoto, a location that always intrigues Jarrett, and the audience's appreciation is registered in lengthy bursts of applause.

## CHARLES LLOYD LIFT EVERY VOICE ECM 133433 2XCD

Resurrected as a force in music, modern Lloyd has been nurtured by ECM and in return has added his warm eloquence to their catalogue. He's blurring deep calm without complacency these days, as the opening rag-like "Hymn To The Mother" proclaims, and he's associating with musicians who can respect and enhance that quality of gentle fire in his playing. Pianist Gert Allen and guitarist John Abercrombie provide high calibre accompaniment with sensitive support from drummer Billy Hart and Marc Johnson or Larry Greshner on bass. If the inclusion of yet another version of "Amazing Grace" on an already long double album looks unimpressive, sheer musicianship counters the threat of banality. Meanwhile, former springboards such as Elmgreen's "Tim Afford" receive gorgeous readings.

## SABIR MATEEN & BEN KARETNIK SUN XING JAZZ 001 CD

Mateen was a member of pianist Horace Tapscott's group and he also played for a while with Sun Ra. In recent years he has attracted notice with the TEST quartet, and with two CDs of duets with drummers Sunny Murray and Ilham Drake. Do Sun Xing his saxophones, flute and clarinets are heard together with Massachusetts-based percussionist Karetnik. It's a long, loose concert recording that at times threatens to sprawl, at times grows tense and concentrated, at times smoothes their ignites. Mateen's playing is energetic and packed with echoes that vary according to which instrument he's blowing. Karetnik, who has studied with Andrew Cyrille, Sunny Aitchul and Basia Boun, is also elusive, taking freedom to mean the right to roam musically. There's plenty of solo space, with duetting viewed as complementary coexistence rather than obligatory close shadowing.

## LEE PUI MING WHO'S PLAYING AMBIANCES MAGNETOUSTES AM606 CD

Born in Hong Kong, Lee Pui Ming started playing piano at the age of three. More than 40 years on and now based in Toronto, Ming is an extraordinarily dynamic and athletic performer. It's as if her extensive studies in the classical and jazz repertoire have come to fruition in a total piano approach that connects the finely coordinated movements of her whole body into the entire range of the instrument's historical

and physical resources. Other musicians have been as vigorous at the keyboard and have driven the casing and moosies into equally effective play, but Ming's sound is unique and highly exciting. Unoubtedly this music is best witnessed live, but crucial lessons from his performance are preserved on the excellent *Who's Playing*. Jeanne Hiltz appears on three tracks, extending the terms of the drama with her wild singing and a touch of alto sax.

## IVO PERELMAN FEATURING LOUIS SCLAVIS THE VENTRILOQUIST LEO 133445 CD

Brazilian tenor Perelman is a powerful, at times overpowering, inheritor of classic free jazz values. He has rarely matched these performances, where he is curbed, challenged and steered on three tracks by the marvellous Sclavis on bass clarinet and soprano sax. Perelman's wild energy is channelled into pockets within the ensemble sound and benefits enormously. Bassist Paul Rogers adds his undiluted shaping strength and drummer Ramon Lopez has just the right combination of force and flamboyance. On three other tracks pianist Christine Wodaszczyk replaces Sclavis, delightfully becoming the lid as well as rattapping in bursts alongside Perelman.

## PAUL RUTHERFORD CHICAGO 2002 EMANEM 4002 CD

Rutherford took his trombone to the Windy City last April to perform at the Empty Bottle Festival. This recording from the event begins with an inimitable half-hour monologue in the course of which his instrument ventures freely across a broad spectrum of expressive possibilities, from pensive musing to vibrant chatter. Lou Corbelli and his soprano also made the journey and on three further substantial tracks the British veterans are heard in cabaret with Chicagoans Jeff Bishop on trombone, celists Fred Longue-Holm and bassist Kent Knazler, plus visiting Swedish Mats Gustafsson on tenor and percussionist Kyll Nordsten. Though recording conditions were less than perfect, shifting alignments within this unusual group result in some exceptional music. It's good to hear Corbelli successfully negotiating terms in unfamiliar company, and Rutherford's solo should not be missed.

## ROGER SMITH SPANISH GUITAR EMANEM 4003 CD

In 1980 the LMC issued Spanish Guitar, an understated set of solo improvisations by Roger Smith, on its own label. Dave Hunt has transferred the music directly and cleanly from vinyl, augmented with recordings from 1992 and 1997. Derek Bailey's stamp on Smith's approach was more pronounced in 1980, but taken together with his later Emanem recordings, this release confirms Smith's development out of prolonged personal immersion in the acoustic character of his instrument. Notes from ruminating strings don't linger long. Smith makes ringing transitions and sustains momentum with ingenuity. □



# Modern Composition

Reviewed by Andy Hamilton

**GEORGES APERGHIS**  
**MUSIQUE DE CHAMBRE**  
ZIG ZAG TERRITORIES/20200001 CD

**GEORGES APERGHIS**  
**DIE HAMLETSMASCHINE-ORATORIO**  
CYPRUS CYPRIOT CD

Georges Aperghis was born in Greece in 1945 but moved to Paris in the 60s, and almost all his work, including these characteristically surreal chamber pieces from the last decade, has a theatrical dimension, influenced by Mounéo Kagel. *Five Pieces For Euphrasie And Celeste* features the *espéranto*, an "ailing color" with sympathetic strings that also functions percussively. This whirling instrument delicately pervades the "vocal" world of Aperghis's eerie and quirky creations. *La Nuit En Tête (Night In The Mind)* is for chamber ensemble in more vigorous health, deploying comparable extremes of vocal and instrumental register. For *okoué*, allusive, this remarkable disc deserves to gather attention for the enterprising Zig Zag label.

*Die Hamletmaschine*, featuring the *actus* ensemble recorded live in Stuttgart, is based on Heiner Müller's tragic poems which alludes to Shakespeare's play; this "oratorio" is a field of "nurs" is no less outlandish than the chamber music. Reflecting the composer's strong affinity for the baroque, its instrumentation includes a synthesizer preset to Hammond organ colours—"it's done indeed from a haunting sound to it," Aperghis candidly concurs. But the Zig Zag disc is the one for newcomers.

**JAMES CLAPPERTON**  
**LONG JOURNEY BACK**  
METIER/MSV92033 CD

The Aberdeen-born pianist and composer is known for performances of uncompromising New Complexity by Michael Finnissey and Brian Ferry; however, in 1988, he suggests, his own compositional vision underwent a 90 degree turn, shown in this fine collection of piano music from the last decade. Certainly the melodic element is often clearer, and very simple and lovely on the two *North East Songs*, arrangements of traditional material. From his remarks about the artistic wealth of Catholic Scotland vandalised by the Protestant Reformation, it's clear that Clapperton shares a Romantic religious affiliation with fellow Scot James MacMillan, though his musical temperament is less expressive. The *Resonance Between Age And Youth* for two pianos—both Clapperton, presumably—is a lovely debut; like *The Resonance Of Dressed* it refers to poems by early Renaissance master Robert Herrington. But Clapperton's more complex methods, such as what at first sounds like ornamentation, are less distant from Finnissey's technique of coloration of the melody. The results are stunningly beautiful.

**MORTON FELDMAN**  
**SOMETHING WILD: MUSIC FOR FILM**  
KARROS KAK101226 CD

Morton Feldman's career as a film composer began inauspiciously. Commissioned to write the score for Jack Garfield's 1961 movie *Something*

*Wild*, he composed three minutes of music for the opening scene where the lead actress—also the director's wife—is raped. Hearing the gentle, hyacinthine result, you feel the director had a point when he complained, "My wife is being raped and you write *celesta music*!" More successful was the music to accompany Hans Namuth's famous short of Jackson Pollock at work, although according to the recent biopic, the filming was the catalyst for the artist's return to alcoholism. Jackson himself was enthusiastic: "I am burning to hear the music of the young Feldman—I think it's great!" he commented. Feldman went on to write the music for Namuth's film about Willem De Kooning, and both pieces get fine interpretations by Ensemble Recherche. A delightful if not essential disc.

**BEAT FURRER**  
**STIMMEN**  
KARROS KAK101227 CD

Pieces from the 80s and 90s by the Swiss composer, performed by various ensembles from Stuttgart, Cologne and Vienna: Beat Furrer (his first name is pronounced "Boy-er") has recently focused on choir and percussion, and in the case of *Stimmen*, both together. For a choir of 32, often using toneless voice production, and some unusual percussion including rulers moved over wooden tables, Furrer shows great delicacy in his sonic effects. *Quartett* for percussion explores some shadowy dreamscapes. The Beat goes on...

**SOFIA GUBAIDULINA**  
**ST JOHN PASSION**  
HÄNSSLER CLASSICS/94406 2XCD  
**SOFIA GUBAIDULINA**  
**DE PROFUNDIS**  
BLACK BOX/BBM1094 CD

De Profundis features music for solo accordion, but not the kind heard at my local Derwentdale Accordion Club. There are two pieces by Tatar composer Sofia Gubaidulina, Chamber Suite by the Russian Vladimir Zolotarev and *Alone* by Erik Johansen from Finland. Gubaidulina's dark, forbidding soundworld is made for the accordion, and she's exploited the instrument on a number of compositions most notably in *Once*. On the title piece, named from the Latin version of the Psalm "From the depths of despair I cry unto Thee, O Lord", accordionist David Farmer produces a ferocious assault on the instrument; *Et Especto* dialogues Schnittke in its fraught expressionism, though with a contrasting predilection for the timeless sounds of the 'a-bout'. Johansen's *Alone* is even more violent than Gubaidulina's pieces, but Zolotarev's suite is a rather unmemorable tonal excursion.

A more problematic release is Gubaidulina's *St John Passion*, one of four "Passions" recorded by the Hänssler label in 2000—others were by Wolfgang Rihm, Ben Durr and Osvaldo Golijov. This is a powerful large-scale work that touches on the theatrical phantasmagoria associated with Schnittke. Low voices and brass predominate, with a vivid sense of the antique and liturgical. But as sometimes with Schnittke, there's a question

about the musical content underlying the rhetoric.

**MAURICIO KAGEL**  
**SCHWARZES MADRAL**  
WINTER & WINTER/S40000 CD

The Argentine maverick plays with form, and it's often hard to tell whether he's being ironic or not. With its peering changes of tone and semantic register, his music is extremely intriguing. Indeed, he's a conceptual artist, and if that sometimes raises the question how far his music stands up outside the theatrical experience, it doesn't apply here. The *String Trio* from 1984-85, performed by The Schönberg Ensemble, administers the classical tradition a poke in the eye with a sharp stick—traditional forms denuded of conventional meaning. *Schwarzes Madral (Black Madral)*, 1998-99, performed by Rundfunkchor Berlin with soloists on trumpet, tuba and percussion, is based on names of African towns and settlements. Though the composer made no programmatic attempt to imitate African rhythms or melodies, allusions are evident. The result is one of the most successful of Winter & Winter's ongoing Kagel projects.

**GÖRGY LIGETI**  
**CELLO CONCERTO/ CLOCKS AND CLOUDS/ VIOLIN CONCERTO/SIPPAL DOBBAL, NÁDHEGÉDÜL**  
TELARC/84209431 CD

Volume three of Ligeti's more modestly titled *Ligeti Project*, which takes over from Sany's abandoned *Complete Edition*, now reaches some concerto classics, performed by Aiko and The Schoenberg Ensemble. Against these who think modern composition is a ghetto, Ligeti's humane vision embraces the world. The title of *Clocks And Clouds* captures the twin poles of his classic output: quirky mechanisms and drifting sound masses. The *Violin Concerto*, a late masterpiece from 1992, gets a fine interpretation from soloist Frank Peter Zimmermann that's more understated than dedicatee Sascha Gwollf's on Boulez's premiere recording. The first recording of *Sippal, Dobbal, Nádhegédül*, from 2000, shows that Ligeti's powers were still sharp; these surreal settings of Hungarian poems by Weöres Sándor feature characteristically quirky accompaniment such as harmonicas and ocarinas.

**STEVE REICH**  
**TEHILLIM/ THE DESERT MUSIC**  
CANTALOUPE/CAT10003 CD

Two compositions from the glorious effluence that arrived with Reich's *Music For 18 Musicians*, before his seduction by video art and multimedia productions where the music doesn't stand alone convincingly. *Tehillim (Psalms)* was an ECM classic from the 80s. Here it's given a driving interpretation by Alarm Will Sound and Osso. If *Tehillim* is closer to pure minimalism, *The Desert Music (1984)* is darker and more dissonant, with some gorgeous glassroads. The poem of the same name was

one of William Carlos Williams's greatest, but Reich's insistent rhythms meant he had to break up its flexible long lines. Yet it loses nothing in power in its recent chamber version, in this supple yet rhythmically precise performance.

**WOLFGANG RHM**  
**JAGDEN UND FORMEN**  
DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON/471556 CD

Wolfgang Rihm's *Jagden Und Formen (Hunts And Forms)* is a musical equivalent to Jackson Pollock's "all-over painting", which aimed to fill every gap in the canvas. The German composer, born in 1948, studied with Stockhausen but subsequently tried to develop an expressive language for the post-war avant garde. His new composition is a work in progress in Boulez's sense, a successor of György Farkas recorded on Karos and reviewed in *The Wire* 203. Presumably, this is what Rihm's talk of "overpainted layers" is about. The insistent rhythmic patterns of its wild heterometry make for restless music—the few momentary lulls afford little relief from a consistent nervous energy and agitation. An exhausting but exhilarating musical experience.

**DAVID SHEA**  
**CLASSICAL WORKS II**  
TELARC/8420943 CD

Shea is an interesting figure who crosses the divide between uptown Paris and downtown New York. Born in 1951, he worked as turntablist and sampler on John Zorn's *Cobra* projects, but since moving to Brussels in 1999 he's created sampler technology at IRCAM while writing for classical ensembles *Musique Nouvelles* (featured here) and *Isius*. Sampling techniques create a shadow or aura of the original acoustic material, and while *Solo/Duo For Cello* is maybe too close to the vapid cello soundscapes of Philip Sheppard's *The Glass Cathedral*, *Chamber Symphony No 2*, the most substantial composition, has more edge.

**HILDE TORGERSØN**  
**VOICE STORIES**  
ALBEDO/ALB013 CD

The stories told by vocalist Hilde Torgersen include Giacomo Leopardi's *Hö and Tiegrün*, unaccompanied and monodic. Debate rages over how far Sibelius's composers are transcriptions of improvisations, and certainly these haunting songs have an improvisatory feel, with Asian and African inspirations. On Luigi Nono's *La Repubblica Italiana* from 1964, for voice and four channel tape, the strident, dramatic gestures of the composer's early period are prominent. Alejandro Villal's *Masago's Confession*, for female voice and tape, is a scene from the composer's chamber opera *Rashomon* from 1995, while in *Al-Hadigah's Dream*, the most compelling track on a memorable disc, the medieval visionary and composer dreams of the armies of Islam invading Europe. Nono's voices start singing in the forbidden modes of the infidel, which are yet overwhelmingly beautiful. □



# Outer Limits

Reviewed by Jim Haynes

## DAN BURKE & KEVIN DRUMM MORT AUX VACHES STALPAUR NO NUMBER CD

In contributing to the partnership between Stalpaure and VPHO radio, tabletop guitarist Kevin Drumm has paired up with fellow Chicagoan Dan Burke, best known as the ring-leader for the equally multifaceted Illusion Of Safety. Equipped with a set of upper register frequencies from controlled feedback, laptop synthesis and guitar manipulations, Burke and Drumm have sneered the pristine electronic flow of the micro-glitch ethos into a toxic haze. At first, these glitch particles exist just on the edge of perception; but across several, varying progressions, Burke and Drumm infuse them with a brooding, white hot energy. It's for sure, not that Dan Burke's acclaimed *Shore Melancholia*, but just as successful in the way it concentrates on the anticipation to the noise and not just its organic release.

## CLIMAX GOLDEN TWINS LOVELY ANOMALOUS NORTH CD

The effusive and eclectic Climax Golden Twins describe their working process as an enigmatic cycle with the following stages: "sound, destruction of sound, reconfiguration of sound, realization that original sound was better, grasping of truth, longing of sound, sound, destruction of sound..." For Lovely, the Twins have dwelt upon the longing stage in the process, as this was originally commissioned for the Ambient soundtrack to an installation of neon sculptures and their left dormant for several years. They recently rediscovered those recordings, reimagined some of the sounds, and released it as a limited edition CD-R with an accompanying pillow. This, the third permutation of Lovely, is without the pillow, but strives for the same goal: to pull the listener to sleep through an unobtrusive wash of pleasant sounds. Closed circuit feedback generation, long strangled instruments, thoughtfully coloured synth patches or e-bowed guitar may be the source material which has been thoroughly blurred into Lovely's billowing ambient and monochromatic timbres in a style not unlike Nurse With Wound's *Soliloquy For Leth*. Failing to sleep is inevitable with this album; yet at the same time, it's rather mesmerising.

## JÖHANN JOHANSSON TOUNGHO ENGLISH TO NO CD

Upon setting out to score the music for the play *Englisch* by Hans Jörgen Johansson, Jöhan Johansson, co-founder of the Icelandic arts organization Káttan Mót, came upon a text by the Latin poet Catullus which roughly translates as, "I hate and I love, Why do I do it, you might ask? I don't know, but I feel it happening to me, and its tearing me apart!" This poem cohesively bridges the emotional opposites which clashed within the play itself. As the play's content was "extremely violent and disturbing" (according to Johansson), his approach to the music score was one of tenderness, beauty and grace. Johansson's score is a set of 16 delicate

miniatures, whose variations are amazingly complex despite their simple, descending melodies for strings, glasses, glass, harmonium, piano, organ and electronics. The poem from Catullus appears twice within the score, sang both times by a computer programmed as a Speak 'N' Spell countermeasures. This typifies Johansson's score with its precise use of metaphor, its exceptional balance (digital/analog, harshly/soft, violent/tender, etc) and its expressive leitmotifs that unveil a profound sadness without ever wallowing in pathos.

## LOTUS EATERS MIND CONTROL FOR INFANTS NUROBOT VARIO CD

A few months back, James Plotkin got himself into some legal troubles over his electrobeat Metacore project Atomsmasher, which is also the name of some clueless pop track that accused Plotkin's group of deliberately stealing the name from them. As a result, Plotkin's group is now called Phantasmasher (but one has to wonder if the Plotkin project will suffer a similar fate, as the Lotus Eaters were a key 1960s pop group in the 60s with a couple of Top 40 singles. In both cases, however, it's very unlikely that anybody will mistake one project for the other. Here Plotkin collaborates with Stephen O'Malley (Sun O))), Khazari, Burning Witch) and Aaron Turner (Isis, Old Man Gloom) as a psychocoustic synthesis to the Metacore, doom and maggot salad that all three typically produce. Mind Control For Infants transforms a number of guitar techniques (classical picking, slide guitar, microtonal scales, whammybar ambience) into a transcendent atmosphere through semi-improvised ritual. While the album opens with a celestial pattern infusing a strong playfulness to the slow motion attitudes, the trio gradually drains the mood with deep rumblings, distant percussive clouds and a general malice common to their Metal productions.

## MONOS SUNNY DAY IN SAGINOMIYA EDITION: XXIV CD

Just as their predecessor Ono had an open door policy towards like-minded contributors, Monos (Ono's Darren Tate and Colin Potter) have welcomed field recordings from Japanese sound artist Osamu Sasaki into their electronically sculpted drone/works for Sunny Day In Saginomiya, cast against the piles of electronic gear that Potter also employs for his live in Nurse With Wound. Diskless's recordings of shyness bird calls, wind and airplanes emerge on Sunny Day as though the environmental qualities of light and air intrinsic to the original sounds had been thickened to the sonorous equivalent of water. Throughout the field vibrations and distanced two-blade flutter of the piece, late methodically injects spectral guitar details that quietly converge the guitar drives idealization of the first Main recordings. The second half of the album, "October," stems Osamu's recordings of meditative gestures with gongs, bells and chimes through a judicious use of delays that occasionally spiral upwards into the ether.

## IAN NAGOSKI VIOLETS FOR YOUR FURS EDITION: XXX LP

A writer, curator and sound artist from Baltimore, Ian Nagoski regularly collaborates with light sculptor Daniel Corbett, who has contributed the most inducing artwork with a spiralling, chessboard pattern to this limited edition picture disc. The Op Art visual effects recall the basic idea behind Brian Gysin's dream machine, that a specific movement of alternating patterns can stimulate an alpha state in the brain, which in turn can cause any number of transcendent or hallucinatory experiences. Nagoski matches Corbett's visuals with a phenomenologically rich sound construction of phase shifting vibrations coated from electromagnetic fields. Far from being static, the chorus of pulses parallels the visual disorientation as a constant fluctuation between harmonic consonance and dissonance with the subtle differences in speed throughout the dense spectrum of electric sounds. Not unlike Olafur Arnalds' affinity for a minimalist device of ornamental flourishes, Violets For Your Furs is a wonderful, if static, document of the relationship between frequency dynamics, both sonic and optic.

## ORGANUM SPHYX ROBOT KIROO CD

Organum's ring-leader David Jackman assembled an all-star line-up of Jim O'Rourke, Christoph Heemann, Eddie Prevost and Owsen James Rowe for the Sphynx recording sessions, which took place over three years beginning in 1990. This album's metallic immersions remain consistent with the Organum templates for the construction of ecstatic chords through dense layers of bowed cymbals, steel string instruments, slashing e-bow guitar noise and Jackman's haunting flourishes from a shakuhachi. The notable exception to this well-executed formula is the dynamic palette of rapid percussive cam of Prevost on Sphynx's opening track, "Aurora." Here, the Organum date marvellously intersects with Prevost's muscular expression that tumultuously erupts from this drum kit. Originally released as a limited vinyl-only edition through Jackman's Acanthus Records, Sphynx now features two unreleased recordings from the same sessions.

## CHRISTIAN RENOU FRAGMENTS AND ARTICULATIONS ORGANO PAUT GPESS CD

Throughout the 80s and 90s, Christian Renou recorded countless LPs and cassette-only releases under the moniker Brume, but has recently dropped that moniker in favour of his own name. Not much has changed, however, as Renou is still crafting homebrewed variations on the musique concrète and electroacoustic compositions supported by INA-GRM. He purposefully intersects pre-recorded materials through clanging and chaus-éssed systems, scattering the sonic rubble in sedimental layers as a compositional strategy. With Fragments And Articulations, field recordings, free noise drum

sounding and "very dry frequencies" from a homemade radio receiver are the source materials for Renou's experiments. The extremely diverse use of effects on these sounds certainly recalls the energetic works of Pomegranate (albeit without his penchant for auto-generative programming), yet at the same time, Renou's manifestations of very present and very physical sounds recall Raji Asano's earlier work that bordered on Fluxus-like observation of reestablished everyday events and noises.

## THUJA SUNS EMERSON JONES EYES CD

Deep permeates the improvisations of Thuja, the most prolific configuration of the loosely structured Jewelled Artist Collective of Californian ministers and sound artists (see *The Wire* 219). The conversations between all of the various Jewelled Artist projects are informed not only by the exchange of members but also by a psychocentric desire to awaken the imaginations within their audience. The images that Thuja strive for on Suns, their fourth release (excluding a couple of super-limited CD-R productions), are of an urban-dimension sprouted and redeemed by natural vegetation, achieved through an interplay of filtered densities and gestural details from harmonium, organ, guitars, piano, percussion, cut, bowed metals, stones and then some. Subtle melodies and tenuous rhythms repeatedly step into Thuja's atmosphere of sound, reflecting the organic patterns of gnarled root systems, broken concrete smothered with moss, and settling timber suspended in pools of black water.

## WOLF EYES SLUCER HAWKON HINNO CD

## DEAD HILLS TROUBLEMAN TUD THUJA COLLP

Michigan noise/punk project Wolf Eyes reconstitute damaged electronic gear and primitive noise-generating devices as the basis for their electroacoustic digests. Their inventions, like the 'orb' (a three-tier toy device that spins and roars) and the rock tumbler (an eight-bit pitch sampler/pitchbender) mingle sound into the neuritic, beeping elements that the group compress around monolithic rhythms. This hammering insistency shares none of the sleek grooves found in their Detroit techno neighbours; rather it is a cursory, rigid spasm from a single sample progressing forward with all of the grace of a Panzer Division. Flanked by piercing trumpet death cries, grimy guitar distortion and electronic chop-shop vocalisation from ring-leader Nathan Young, Wolf Eyes' electronics are a grained reincarnation of industrial culture's pioneers.

Dead Hills is a shorter 23 minute assault that continues with such references, particularly in the last track "Lithium Toxic", which is as close as you can get to Robert's "Bad Mo" without being plagiarised. However, it becomes evident that Wolf Eyes have tuned from the underlying critiques within industrial culture and have emphasised an authorship of visceral horror. □

## New music books: devoured, dissected, dissed



in the first decades of the 20th century. American technological developments in acoustics and electroacoustics revolutionised the way sound was experienced, in both live and recorded form. Emily Thompson's 'soundscape' is a tensor of metropolitan auditions and countryside radio broadcasts, an imaginary place always under construction, over in thrall to the scientific and commercial forces of modernity. Beginning with the attempt to regulate reverberation in concert halls and ending with the emergence of the recording studio, these technological and material forces at work in the research, design and consumption of pre-World War Two American acoustic experiences. Standardisation of acoustic spaces through design, the collapsing of the natural relationship between sound and space, a desire for control over noise – Thompson argues that these are characteristics of a rationalising, modern condition. In a history of acoustics, the gradual refinement of the signal to noise ratio is a matter of record. But it's also a powerful metaphor; although Thompson isn't quite enough to take her argument to the next level, the desire for the acoustically underdone is a characteristic of modernity that really began to reach fruition in the war her story ends, 1933.

Acoustics was a relatively neglected branch of physics at this time, but a community of scientists and a body of work began to grow up following Sabine. Thompson documents and evaluates the contributions of many of these new acousticians as they strove to create the means to accurately measure their sonic material. In the United States, military shipping lanes and bombarded battlefields of World War I drew tools of sonic detection that had an immediate application. But the search for accurate, precise and quantifying technologies led to a wider resonance for Thompson, one which suits her continually restated characterisation of modernism as the ultra-rational exercise of inference of all kinds. The article represents the early history of American acoustic technology as running from 'noise to signal, natural to controlled', but acknowledges that another line of development suits the other wave essentially from 'pure'

The problem of representing the historical auditory experience are most apparent in Thompson's discussion of noise abatement in the 20th century city. We need to emphasise the new soundscape of mechanical noise, she won't empathise with earlier generations who might have found their own noise thresholds transgressed by the non-technological. Sensory experience is relative rather than absolute; and a different sort of perceptual conflict is illustrated by the endless list of concert hall scandals that constitutes the author's analysis of the new acoustic experiences in music. Relying on contemporary reports rather than her own critical evaluations, Thompson makes the most striking

The book ends with the opening of another building, Radio City Hall in New York's Rockefeller Center. Marking a temporary end to the American fascination with acoustic technological progress and novelty, the music hall's great achievement was its electroacoustically enhanced sound system. But while that system could relay sounds from the stage to every corner of the vast auditorium, the stage itself was often out of sight. Practitioners aside, the lavish spectacles at Radio City had planned poor, unpopular in Depression-era New York And, in a final vindication of her argument, when the forces of modernity seek to repress nature but ultimately lose out, the author asserts why that these buildings – noise-proof, ultra-efficient temples of the 1920s – were packed with deadleasly asbestos: Thompson's book is hard work, but a valuable resource all the same.

## THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO JOHN CAGE

### DAVID NICHOLLS (EDITOR)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS P&T 61746

BY PHILIP CLARK

David Reilly's 1992 biography, *The Roaring Silence*, and James Pritchett's more analytical study, *The Music Of John Cage*, both set a standard for writing that reclaimed John Cage from the geekier recesses of academia. Reilly took enormous trouble not just to investigate Cage's background and demonstrate how his pieces were put together, but also to explore what the consequences of the composer's actions meant both for him and for wider areas of artistic thought. With some notable exceptions, the problem with the contributors to this Cambridge Companion to John Cage is that they academics who are only capable of preaching to the choir. Academic writing does have its place, but not in a volume that's presumably meant to disseminate Cage to a wider and perhaps even uninitiated public.

The book sets out to explore Cage over three areas – "Aesthetic Context", "Sounds Music Images" and "Interaction And Influence". Editor David Nicholls begins by describing the influence that American society and culture had on Cage during his formative years. He explores the composer's relationship with his extraordinary father, the inventor John Cage Sr, and the impact

the economic crisis of the late 1920s had on his family. He argues that, given the importance technology had for Cage's mature work, the fact that he witnessed the growth of the motion picture industry and radio is significant, and his chapter concludes with a brief description of Cage's earliest education. Nicholls's essay does throw up some interesting ideas and connections, but is bungled by the academic's necessity to arrive at the obvious via the convoluted, and by some interminable jargon. Particularly unpleasant is the atrocious phrase "aesthetic locus" that he shoehorns into nearly every paragraph, making his writing feel functional rather than portraying real enthusiasm for his subject.

The discussion by Christopher Scully of the impact Central European culture made on Cage's aesthetic "locus" is certainly more compelling, and the section concludes with David W. Patterson's intriguing thought that Cage was highly selective in the ideas he took from Asian writings, often borrowing the concepts but ditching the philosophy. Editor Nicholls's biographical sketch of Cage's early life may be dry to the point of exhaustion, but it's nothing compared to the mind-numbing descriptions of Cage's music found in the "Sounds Music Images" section. I've read bus timetables with more narrative punch than David W. Bernstein's account of Cage's early annual works and pieces for prepared piano. Here's an all too typical

excerpt describing *Two Pieces For Piano* (1955):

"... In the first movement *Movement A* appears in measures 2 and 24 in the right hand and measures 9, 16 and 34 in the left. *Movement B* occurs in measures 4, 6, 22, 23 and 26 in the right hand; *Movement C* appears in measure 8 in the right hand, measures 3, 11, 14 and 33 in the left." It's not just that this sort of writing manages to reveal nothing of the tone, sound or inner tensions of the music, it also needlessly replicates material that's easier to grasp from simply looking at the score or through diagrammatic representation. Moreover it reinforces people's worst fears about the modern music racket, and is a prime case of what an old music teacher of mine used to call 'a whiff of analysis'.

Bernstein does attempt to put this analysis into some sort of historical context, but has a habit of floating ideas that he feels to develop. He mentions that some of Cage's later twelve-tone pieces confound their systematic basis by resembling *En Sade*, but doesn't confront the obvious aesthetic questions. Similarly the fact that Cage had few scruples about shoring his compositional systems in percussion works like *First Construction* ones out to be explored in the light of his later preoccupations, and Bernstein's discussion of the objections Cage had about Beethoven poses as many questions as it answers.

It's therefore a blessing to come across writers who have more of a "take" on Cage. Katharine Brown's memoir about his methods of producing visual art at her Cowi Point Press is charmingly written and offers real insight into this rarely explored facet of his creativity. Lisa Miller (co-author of Lou Harrison's biography) takes as her starting point the notorious *Black Mountain Piece* to explore Cage's collaborative work. This 1952 "happening", the pioneer of multimedia concepts, was organised by Cage and poet David Tudor, dancer Merce Cunningham and painter Robert Rauschenberg. Miller explores how Cage's collaborations with Cunningham helped to fix in his mind the distinction between predetermined processes and non-intentional actions. John Holzlitzel then follows through with an excellent account of the centrally important role David Tudor took in the composer's creative life.

Kyle Gann concludes with a provocative piece about Cage's role as guru, exploring how younger composers have applied his ideas to their own work. It's an inspiring end to a disappointing book that is largely a wasted opportunity. Far too much effort is spent on and note-poking and there's a surprising level of duplicated material as writers draw on the same sources. This is especially unobjectionable when Cage's late number pieces – surely some of the most significant masterpieces of the late 20th century – merely warrant a mention. □

## ESSENTIAL COWELL: SELECTED WRITINGS ON MUSIC BY HENRY COWELL

### DICK HIGGINS (EDITOR)

MCDONOUGH & COMPANY H&K 223 50

BY PHILIP CLARK

The reputation of American composer Henry Cowell (1897-1965) has often been overshadowed by the transcendental and charismatic scores of his visionary New England colleague, Charles Ives. Cowell's output can appear bizarrely schizophrenic and inconsistent, and to be lacking in Ives's central philosophical thrust. His most widely performed piece is a set of orchestral *Hymns And Fuguing Tunes* that feels oddly "correct" and wistfully conservative. Yet Cowell's extraordinary collection of piano pieces, works like *The Banshee* and *Arcadian Harp*, tell of a composer absolutely fearless in his determination to put himself out on a limb and experiment with wildly sculpted tone clusters and the possibilities offered from inside the piano. For Lou Harrison, a Cowell pupil, noted in the *New York Times* that Cowell's example that "inspired himself and John Cage to produce their works for junkyard percussion ensembles, and became a catalyst for Cage's adoption of the prepared piano."

That Cowell was an instinctive experimenter, Lou Harrison is in no doubt, and this stimulating collection of Cowell's writings demonstrates how the composer squared what seems to be an intractable circle. To disgusted radicals who complained that works like *Hymns And Fuguing Tunes* were "reactionary, Cowell snarled, "Listen harder – there's just as much innovation there as ever", and to blue-musicians who found works like *The Banshee* difficult to

stomach, Cowell would turn his rebuff on its head, exclaiming, "Listen harder – I am also a conservative!"

In his introduction, editor Dick Higgins suggests the core of Cowell's radicalism lay in his knowing uprooting of the values imposed by a self-serving musical establishment. Cowell poured scorn on American composers who chose to play it safe by writing cod-European scores, and on a musical educational system determined to standardise insensitive musical creativity and limit arbiters. Cowell offers his own vision of what constitutes "acceptable" musical material based not on academic placidism, but on his own experience of the American vernacular and the music he chose to engage with from other cultures.

He begins with a play-like credo about what it meant for him to be a composer: "I believe in music: its spirituality, its exaltation, its ecstatic nobility, its humor, its power to penetrate to the basic kindness of every human being" in the insightful analysis of Ives that follows, Cowell celebrates Ives's ability to turn such qualities into a music built on "feeling", "honesty", "warmth" and "tenderness", rather than working from a "thought-out plan". Cowell delights in the methods Ives devised to portray the harmonic and rhythmic subtleties of American folklore via a previously unbridled network of beating polyrhythms and simultaneous harmonic arpeggios. Yet Ives's complexity is also healthy and generous, allowing room for performers to breathe and express themselves. Cowell prompts the moments in Ives's scores where he encourages performers to add their own contributions to already vast clusters, or to play more loudly than indicated if sufficiently moved

as ways of "[indicating] the performer to share in the creation of the work."

Cowell's sharing method of music making as being the antithesis of a "schoolbook" approach that "seizes out all the original life and fire of music."

Dissonant harmony and tone clusters had an almost mystical significance for both Cowell and Ives, and for the other composers Cowell chooses to discuss, including Carl Ruggles, Charles Seeger and Edward Varèse. Cowell argues that the tone cluster is at the historical peak of a process that began when medieval musicians added harmonisations at the fifth to their baroque melodies. Through Palestrina, Claudio Monteverdi, Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig Van Beethoven, Richard Wagner and Arnold Schoenberg, composers added a new major third approximately once a century until all the intervals had been exhausted.

The tone cluster therefore represents the total spectrum of intervals that Western harmony accrued over the centuries, and became a new starting point. In a provocative article written in 1929, "The Joy Of Making Noise", Cowell proposes the idea that eventually noise itself will eclipse the tone cluster as the composer's main expressive tool. "Although existing in all music, the noise element has been to music as sex is to humanity: essential to its existence but impolite to mention," he writes, and even today creative musicians as varied as Helmut Lachenmann, Cecil Taylor and avant-rockers Luciano Chauri can tread dangerously between musical tradition and annihilating noise, as if this mysterious spectrum holds a key for the future. Even in 1929, Cowell had his finger on the pulse.

He believed, sincerely, and proved theoretically, that the mathematical proportions governing the harmonic order of pitches could also be applied to rhythmic irregularities to produce a "harmony of rhythm." Such concepts gave Cowell, and later Cage and Harrison, a theoretical basis to explore so-called noise, and Cowell heard a natural parallel for his heavily layered percussive sounds in the various non-Western musics that fascinated him. It's no exaggeration to say that he was the pioneer of what is now patronisingly labelled "World Music", and his article "Music Of The World's Peoples" is an absorbing account of the techniques of the Asian, Oriental and African folk musics that he painstakingly researched.

Cowell issues a typically passionate attack on Western musicologists who attempt to impose the limitations of their notation on the subtler melodic inflections and rhythmic fits of ethnic folk musics, and his music journalism was, in all its aspects, a warning against the dangers of "cultural" homogenisation. We can be sure he would have heartily disapproved of the present fashion for fat-pocked World Music promoted by major record labels.

Essential Cowell certainly is essential for anyone interested in tracing later developments in American experimental music back to their source. The only criticisms of the present edition are the number of glitches that made it past the proofreader. Edward Varèse's muscular orchestral work *Arcade* appears as the more benign *Arcane* and one chapter is labelled throughout as "Music Of The Orient". Other mistakes are so fundamental that even the most scrupulous computer spellchecker would blush at putting a red squiggle line under them. □



Dead Man means: Little Walter; Art Tatum captured in *Jazz And Death*; Louis Armstrong reimagined in *The Penguin Guide*

**BLUES WITH A FEELING: THE LITTLE WALTER STORY**  
**TONY GLOVER, SCOTT DIRKS & WARD GAINES**  
 ROUTLEDGE HBK \$24.95

BY BEN WATSON

Some eras of music are so saturated with significance, each detail shines. In cases like that of R&B harmonica virtuoso Little Walter — born Marion Walter Jacobs in Merikville, Louisiana, the edge of Cajun country, in 1930, and dying at 209 East 54th Street in Chicago, in February 1968 — it's probably best to let the facts speak for themselves. That's precisely what Tony Glover, Scott Dirks and Ward Gaines do here, building a documentary narrative by presenting us with the results of extensive research. In Britain, Routledge have cornered the market in sociology and cultural studies. One expects dreary acres of postmodern theory from their imprint, but their US branch, which commissioned this book, appears to prefer the facts. Because of Little Walter's essential influence on rock and pop, this dense, 315 page biography could actually serve as a textbook for anyone seeking to understand what recording and mass production do to folk expression, and how cultural forces like music relate to social change.

Blues musicians call the harmonica the 'harp'. It's an appropriate name: for its nagging, breathy insistence and for the way its wheezing chords recall church organs, and hence angelic musics. Little Walter made his name with The Muddy Waters Band in the late 40s and early 50s. His

harp epitomised the new powers of electric amplification just as much as Waters's slide guitar. Walter would hold harmonica and mic cupped together in his hands, sending the signal to his own amp and speaker. He would blow hard, using the resulting hiccoughs and distortion to spike his streams of ideas. The authors here call him the Charlie Parker and Jim Hendrix of his chosen instrument, and that is no exaggeration. Walter's popping attack, with its sudden drop-outs and dynamic peaks, drove any vestige of rural quaintness from the harmonica. His amp-ed-up harp sounds twisted and wonky, super-urban, like a train's conductor bar fazing on the electric rail. Little Walter used every resonance and squeal from his speaker, creating a wraparound sonic which intoxicated the crowd. Glover is the author of a guide to harmonica playing which has been a bestseller for four decades. His technical dissections of Walter's solos — the differently leaved models, the chromatic harp, the "quiver" created by moving the instrument over the lips rather than shaking the head — are a joy.

Little Walter's importance is explained in terms familiar to jazz and improv listeners. Walter was continually inventive, resisting the temptation to rely on familiar licks. Indeed, his "formula for success" is described as "the absence of a rigid formula or pattern". The strength of 50s R&B was that the audience recognised this quality, and so flooded to see artists like Little Walter: marketing had not yet learned to manufacture image and prey upon identity. Local harp players would sit in, only to be outbitten by the master —

a version of the "cutting contests" which enlivened swing and boogie-woogie with bebop. Walter also played guitar, and would work out his arrangements on that instrument (drummer Sam Levy said he never saw him pick up a harmonica other than on stage). The immediacy of electric amplification of breath through mouth shaped by lips on metal had a similarly explosive impact to the way the electric guitar was converting intimate finger wiggles into public bravado.

At his peak in the mid-50s, Little Walter was a star, with heaps of dollar bills from door-takings in the boot of his Cadillac. Like many rap stars today, his background did not prepare him for financial success, and he was involved in countless fights. He declared his loved ones and burns — "my people". He carried a pistol, and shot himself in the leg twice. As an uncompromising personality, he had his head frequently cracked by police truncheons. A life of hard touring and hard drinking began to tell on him.

Another obstacle was the folk-blues revival of the late 60s. Promoters and record men who had previously sold to ghetto audiences began chasing the white student market. Leonard Chess no longer let Walter use his mic and amp set-up in the studio, and he had to play acoustically behind Hound Dog Taylor on the American Folk-Blues Festival tour of Europe in 1967 (he chased his fellow musicians as "them damn country coons"). Little Walter's decline into drink and violence was aggravated by

frustration at not being able to dictate the terms of his art (he called the sound of his non-amplified harp, no longer loud enough to direct his musicians, "nauseating").

Of course, the way these facts appear to speak for themselves is a tribute to the authors' musical sensitivity and political acumen. They do not stop to the cheap novelisation that is the poor biographer's standby, instead citing contemporary *Cashbox* record reviews, gossip columns and personal interviews. The hip lingo of yore proves to be extraordinarily evocative. All the musicians make fascinating comments (though Little Walter's sister Marguerite proves to be the most acute observer). The accounts of gigs where musical excitement caused the 'colour bar' (a chain dividing the hall) to be broken are truly inspiring. Myths about universal racial prejudice in the South also bite the dust. Guitar Red recalls: "We'd pull up to a service station, and the man say, 'Would you like to play a party tonight?' We'd say, 'Yessuh', and he ask how much — Walter would give 'em a piece. They'd have us up at the firm, in the barn. They'd have a hootenaw, a big dance — and give us all that country ham and bacon to take home. We stopped at several of them, they loved the blues." This biography doesn't give a rose-tinted view, and the narrative is often harrowing, but it's studied with the odd moments and strange tales which make actually more exciting and hopeful than dreary generalisation: a worthy complement to the epochal music Little Walter blew on his harp. □

## JAZZ AND DEATH: MEDICAL PROFILES OF JAZZ GREATS

FREDERICK J. SPENCER MD  
UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER, NEW YORK

BY ANDY HAMMOND

Dr Frederick Spencer's contribution to jazz literature is one of the most bizarre books on music I've ever come across. A disclosure of the deaths of jazz artists and their often fatal lifestyles. With *Jazz and Death*, the causes behind the great jazz funerals may no longer be misconstrued. Its clinical and morbidly entertaining approach creates an invaluable compendium... reads the blurb. I guess all lifestyles are fatal in the end. Although it's by no means a literary masterpiece, in bringing together the author's three passions — medicine, jazz and right wing libertarian causes — Spencer's morbid monograph makes an ideal gift for the hypochondriac jazz fan.

The libertarian rears its ugly head in connection with the recurring themes of alcoholism and drug addiction. Commenting on

musical migration, Spencer quotes one sensible expert as saying that "alcohol can never make you do a thing better; it can only make you less ashamed of your mistakes". Probably Swing era trumpetist and alcoholic Bunny Beigan was under no illusions; when asked to explain how he could play when hardly able to stand, he's alleged to have replied, "I practice drunk". Spencer doesn't see why any drug should be prohibited while alcohol isn't, though he's short on argument to back up his view.

We're told how the needles that John Coltrane used to inject drugs may have been contaminated with one of the hepatitis viruses. These would cause a chronic infection leading to cirrhosis and liver cancer — and he may already have had chronic hepatitis and cirrhosis by the time of his "spiritual awakening" in 1957 when he gave up drugs (except for LSD). I was interested to read that Lester Young's terror of needles kept him from becoming a heroin addict, but in his case as well as that of pianist Bill Evans, death was the result of "portal hypertension with an

oesophageal venous hemorrhage". That is, liver disease obstructs the circulation in the blood vessels to the organ, which causes bleeding from the oesophageal veins, the patient vomiting blood. So the book usefully corrects one misconception, the traditional story that Evans died of a perforated stomach ulcer.

Art Tatum's blindness and Scott Joplin's syphilis are discussed at length, though there's little of interest on Miles Davis's many and serious ailments. In later years, Art Blakey "suffered from the drummers' occupational disease of hearing loss". Syphilis is a particular specialism of the author, and the illustrations are especially gruesome here, and in the case of tonsillectomy, tuberculosis took a severe toll of leading jazz players in the earlier decades, notably the great precursors of bebop, Charlie Christian and Jimmy Blanton. Spencer has something to say on deaths by accident too. I was especially struck by the bizarre explanations of the disappearance of Glenn Miller, at the height of his Swing era fame, on a

flight from England to Paris in 1944. He seems to have had nearly as many posthumous sightings as Adolf Hitler, and one commentator suggested that he was under instructions to be flown secretly to Berlin to take over the German network radio centre, to bring order in the confusion of an unexpected armistice. I was waiting for the famous quip, "Wasn't it sad that it was Glenn Miller that died, and not Glenn Miller's music", but it never came.

There's much interesting medical information along the way. The horn players' "embouchure" is taken from 18th century French for "to put in or to the mouth", the Eustachian tube running from the ear to the back of the nose is named after the 16th century Italian doctor Bartolommeo Eustachio. But though Spencer is an enthusiast, he's not always too reliable on the music, yet he refers to Will Friedwald, one of the most astute writers on jazz singing, as "that verbose, unsuitable critic". But then unfortunately there's nothing medical science can do about the well known complaint of tin ear. □

## THE PENGUIN GUIDE TO JAZZ ON CD: SIXTH EDITION

RICHARD COOK & BRIAN MORTON

PENGUIN Pbk £20

BY JULIAN COVLEY

Almost an institution and certainly monumental, the sixth edition of Richard Cook and Brian Morton's jazz guide now runs to 1730 pages. Unlike ordinary monographs, however, Morton and Cook's magnum opus remains full of life, partly due to its amiable style, at once authoritative in tone and conversational, easily read and sustained remarkably at length. The Guide aims for a comprehensive survey of currently available jazz on CD, and that task of compilation demands awesome stamina in terms of sheer listening. An innumerable spine of giants such as Armstrong, Ellington, Monk, Mingus, Parker, Davis, Coltrane and Coleman may hold the field in place, but the outer reaches extend from "Swiss jazz jokers" The Dry Throat Fellows to Hans Reichel's idiosyncratic guitar solos. To write about such a vast mass of music without becoming dull or mechanically repetitious and to convey something of the pleasure of it all is a real feat, and the authors have managed it once again.

In their brief prefatory autobiographical profiles they declare their shared non-musical interests are horse racing and mild whisky. This is surely true, but increasingly a sense comes across of cultivated personas, Morton and Cook cast as

buddies wandering down jazz's main streets or crossing the backlands of free improvisation, tough enough to take on yet another stack of discs yet sufficiently sensitive to make fine discriminations between what's worthwhile and what's dross.

In stately sentences they're primed to let the similes fly. Catching Derek Bailey playing ballads is "almost like hearing Samuel Beckett sit down in a bar snug to sing old Irish ballads", while finding him in *Ancora* with Bill Laswell and Tony Williams is "like seeing a favourite under give up churning seed potatoes and debubbling chrysanthemums in order to take up juggling". Such figurative indulgences ventilate the book and set it apart from run of the mill surveys. The authors are reacting to the music in a very obvious sense, not just passing clinical judgment.

The Guide is testimony to their taste, whether or not you agree with specific evaluations. Their credentials outside of this publication are more than enough to convince that they know what they are talking about, but one of the Guide's strengths is that the reasons for their views are almost always stated explicitly, not just implied or assumed.

A further strength is their willingness to revise and reconsider. New CD releases are added; those that have lapsed from the catalogue or disappeared from the racks are removed. More impressively, old favourites as well as neglected or previously undemoted recordings have been

placed under close scrutiny yet again. Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald's *Posy And Bess*, by common agreement less than totally successful, is scored once more for nuggets of transcendent musicianship. These are identified in the closing bars of "Summertime" and are duly admired.

A star rating is used as a convenient indicator of each CD's overall musical quality, but it's not a static system. The authors point out that "here and there assiduous readers may again spot a slight change of opinion from our previous edition". Being an assiduous reader I was immediately struck by the fact that a triple CD set by Altimus, John Taylor's trio with Norma Winstone and Kenny Wheeler, which received four stars in the Fourth Edition now rates only two and a half. In this rare case the accompanying text sheds no light on that decline in fortunes. The Art Ensemble Of Chicago's great Urban Bushmen gets knocked down to three and a half stars and is declared to have won less well than expected. It's a key to The Guide's vitality that real revisions of that kind occur. It's good to find the authors returning to Jane Iselin's *Bloom's As One* and antiquating with almost 18th century decorum, "We dismissed it rather peremptorily in our first edition, but returning to it has been a modest pleasure".

No independent-minded listener would want Cook and Morton to act like final arbiters. Definitive judgments place the music under

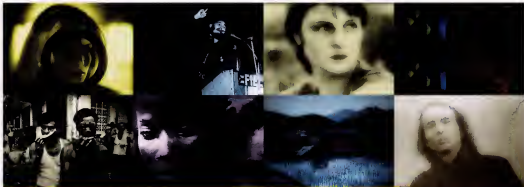
lock and key; it's much more important that they provide such an informative and stimulating overview.

In acknowledgement of the role played by personal predilections the pair award a crown symbol to recordings they particularly cherish. For from being a homogeneous measure of taste, these stretch from Jimmy Griffin's *Incense* cassette solos on the outward-bound 1962 album *Free Fall* to singer Jane Christy's perfectly poised *Something Cool*. Few would dispute their devotion to landmarks such as Miles Davis's *Kind Of Blue*, John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* or Albert Ayler's *Spiritual Unity*. Available Ayler, incidentally, is disappointingly depleted in this new edition. But even a cursory dip into these pages is likely to turn up an intriguing figure or an unknown record, I'm now keen to hear trumpet hand Allan's 70, which is summarily proclaimed "a record that should be in every collection".

Any jazz listener planning to build a collection that extends to all The Guide's four-star recommendations is likely to run bankruptcy. The text, now including brief profiles at the head of each artist's entry, helps to focus choice. The bulk of the book makes it a little inconvenient, it scarcely fits into the empty pocket and it's daunting perforce for new listeners who might prefer a dimmer, more concise catalogue of essential releases. But it remains a gargantuan pleasure for those of us who love the music and love annotated lists. □

# Cross Platform

Sound in other media. This month: **THE CD-ROM format proves perfect for the memory layers and resonances in the filmic art of Chris Marker.** By Ian Penman



Faces and places: images from Chris Marker's *IMMEMORY*

## CHRIS MARKER IMMEMORY

EXACT CHANGE ISBN: 09579736-1 CD-ROM

"Do you remember...?" So much of everything — pop song, photos, x per cent of our daily thoughts — is preoccupied with memory. But what to DO with memory? How to make the archive a knowing pleasure, and not simply a Foucaultian distillation of the already known, the A-Z, the faded history? This is as much political as aesthetic: how to triumph over passive memory syndrome, the potential immobility of looking back?

With *immemory*, Chris Marker makes a show out of memory; and a future shape for the CD-ROM. He addresses enquires to himself — Why do you remember this? Why had you forgotten that? Why did you photograph this girl in that hotel? — and then to us, as if we were one and the same, which we are: all viewers now. (Nothing understandable left of life but the seeing of it, as Stan Brakhage once said.) Stepping into *immemory*, unlike most CD-ROMs, you have NO IDEA where each next step will take you. You open onto a choice — Marker's division of his past into zoned compartments of "War", "Cinema", "Poetry", "Photography", "Museum", "Travel", "Memory" — and then within each choice, each thing: further splits, choices, zones. In the middle of bombed-out Korea a cartoon cat pops up to ask us if we want to also into a Zen garden for a moment, to follow a line of poetry. Isn't this the way memory works? Such sidesteps? Such ad hoc whorls? Here I am writing this between one word (thinking of Walter Benjamin) and the next (thinking now of a woman's red coat). *Immemory* is the realm of the thought that goes on, unobserved, usually unremarked, between one image (x) and the (?) next.

How many CD-ROMs have you come across that were marvelous? That were marvelous AS CD-ROMs, that were gates to another domain, that used the specific echoes and restraints of the format to lead you to unexpected places? See it through your eyes: *Immemory* is like being inside Marker's way of seeing,

step by step, HOW he remembers. And in turn, he shows us how the CD-ROM, this is the lesson, how it might become, anew, a NEW WAY of seeing.

For example, inside "Memory" we find: Proust screen-left and Hitchcock on the right. Somewhere closer, or nearby, is Marker. Not 'gay' like Proust; not 'reactionary' like Hitchcock, he identifies what links them. Ghosts (guests) of memory: Vertigo of time and madness of time, Madeline's glare. He identifies most of all, what he loves in them — how they treat love, and how the love of memory can be a golden vein or gate for (apparently) wildly different artists. Marker makes you think about them in ways you never previously conceived: like the current Apple ad has it: They Just Click!

Marker takes cat (and owl) for totem animals: think of their eyes. But even heaping praise on Marker for his 'eye' (and he is primarily known as film maker, documentarist, photographer) is reductive; because he also writes like an angel.

His writing puts most writers to shame — so fleet, so intimate, so approachably easy but hauntingly resonant. (CLICK on random echoes: John Berger; Sam Shepard's Motel Chronicles; Cortázar's *Hopscotch*.) He writes like he is writing to 'you'. It is like the voiceover in his film *Sans Soleil*, taken down offscreen and unfolded like a Japanese ritual before you — a screen text of fragments, odds, captions. Marker sees in the caption something like explosive (perhaps even 'revolutionary') potential — somewhere between a placid haiku and CLUCK Benjamin or CLUCK EM Coran or CLUCK Karl Krauss. Word and text. Click and contemplation. Melancholy as Mao, joyful as a kitten exploring a spring garden.

*Immemory* imagines the Barthes of Camera Lucida and Empire Des Signes reformatting for CD-ROM. Typically, Marker doesn't just pass over that 'reformatting' but makes it part of the pleasure and the journey and the lesson; makes the most of it; makes a 'thing' of it. A memory thing. Echoes the way memory works. (CLICK: I HAVE SEEN THE FUTURE AND

IT IS CHRIS MARKER'S PAST!) And one lesson is this: we needn't be powerless in the face of new technology, and just follow the given lines. Just as electronics detoured the signal/noise ratio of new technology to its own end, Marker opens up a fantastical aperture in the visual field. (On one level, *immemory* is one step sideways from the kind of sublime 'home movie'.) Marker as the anti-Baudrillard in the war against 'simulation' he has more heart and brio and cunning than people a third his age (an unbelievable 81).

Marker has seen that the computer screen's grey face is a perfect grid for the freeing detours of a new, 'gayer' science of memories; and that this lies in making it follow its own modality rather than trying to lay it out like an ersatz book. Marker sees/shows how much 'memory' is to do with moments — or what we remember as moments. (Apparently separate but immersed in a secret logic: immemorial.) He is either un-81 or plus-81 enough to sense — immediately, immediately — that the CD-ROM is a little memory machine or memory strip, a little diorama laid flat. A new drama-things song waiting to be played, heard, played with, inhabited, spun, sung. A haunt waiting to be filled with our own idiosyncratic ghosts and phantasies.

And — oh! — it's only later, now, just moments ago, weeks gone by, my eyes swimming *IMMEMORY*, that I notice: the thing at the end of your mouse — when you come to click on certain parts of the screen, to access hidden depths, unexpected exit lines, sideways excavations — I've only just seen what's at the end of this spectral cue: it's a cat's eye! Memory as a cat and mouse game! (How not to trust as your guide a man who loves cats so much?) And also, every time we click on the margins, to take our next little step forward to get to his next scene in the bigger picture, the arrowhead that transports us over the next page is... REO; and we move always to the LEFT if we want to go forward.

Chris Marker: still radical after all these years. □ *Immemory* is available from [www.exactchange.com](http://www.exactchange.com)



Left: Band Wagon Jumping exhibition, Manchester. Right: John Cage and DJ Spooky at Other Minds Film Festival



## BAND WAGON JUMPING MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL 3

BY LINA DZUVEROVIC-RUSSELL

As far as the music industry is concerned, the 7" single has been on the brink of extinction for many years. But in the mind of vinyl enthusiasts it remains the format of choice, and a site of prolific sound experimentation. *Band Wagon Jumping*, an exhibition of 7" singles curated by Manchester-based team Work & Leisure International, is a collection of artists' works on vinyl, each capturing a time-based instant or documenting a real life event. Combining new commissioned work by Hayley Newman, Matt Ward and Die Kunst with existing pieces by seven other artists, the records on show range from documentation of simple everyday moments and highly personal experiences to site-specific sound experimentation.

Ten grey prints with turntables fill the stark white cube of Manchester's International 3 Gallery. The austere minimalism of the room stands in sharp contrast to the rich worlds unfolding as you make your way through the exhibition. Some richer than others: Christian Marclay's contribution, recorded in 1996, is conceptually aligned with Piero Manzoni's canned shit. The document, on chocolate brown vinyl, contains the artist's own flatulence recorded over a number of days.

Moving away from the highly personal, British conceptualist Cool Flower's record *Glass*, a minimalist, one-sided clear vinyl number, is filled with the reverberations created by the artist running her finger along the rim of a glass. On the next turntable, David Bellingham's work *Toxstone* similarly focuses on the everyday through a collection of meticulously logged sounds of three and a half minute car journeys in which the artist notes the type of car, the person who drove it and the physical location of the recording.

Stockhausen & Walkman veteran and Impro Musician Matt Ward's contribution documents the 'before and after' of the demolition of a Liverpool tower block. One side is filled with

fragments of daily life, including conversations between the residents recorded in the block two days prior to the demolition, while the other holds an eerie document of the demolition itself. Artist Jonty Semper, whose previous releases contain recordings of various commemorative silences, continues in the same vein with the one minute of silence at Princess Diana's memorial service, a moment carved deep into Britain's collective memory. Jane Schaefer's *Recorded Delivery*, previously released on his own Audi/Dub label, unleashes noises gathered by sending a sound-activated tape recorder through the post. The result is a muffled series of verbal abuse between Royal Mail officers coupled with sounds of the envelope changing hands.

On Roundabouts, performance and sound artist Hayley Newman conducts a simple experiment in two parts involving a background ride, a helicon (bass tube) and a microphone. One side is the recording of a musician playing the helicon while sitting inside a moving train on a background ride. As the train goes round, the sound whizzes past the stationary microphone. On the B side, the microphone travels in the train while the musician remains in a fixed spot.

The voyeuristic experience of listening in on a Catholic confessor in Laurence Lane's *Priest* provides the perfect ending to the show. The piece is based on Lane's own confession, except his own words have been edited, leaving only the reassuring comments of the priest. "The most important thing is that you are making efforts to communicate with God," the priest reassures Lane in a thick Northern English accent.

*Band Wagon Jumping's* collection of events on vinyl stands as a warm homage to the 7". The curatorial decision to focus on time based actions goes some way to explaining why the single is such a popular medium for artists across disciplines. By mixing the ephemeral nature of the selected recordings with subjective aesthetic qualities, *Band Wagon Jumping* succeeds in coherently depicting disparate worlds. It's also more than likely to awaken the collector in anyone who gets to see it. □

## EYES AND EARS: THE OTHER MINDS FILM FESTIVAL SAN FRANCISCO CASTRO THEATRE

USA

BY MOH REEVES

Most of the critical discussion at the inaugural Other Minds Film Festival centred around Paul D Miller aka DJ Spooky and his 'remix' of *Birth Of A Nation*, Dill Griffith's infamous 1915 Civil War epic. It promised to be a provocative piece: why use an electronic artist like Spooky to want to associate himself with a notoriously racist film that brutally caricatures blacks, blames them for the South's economic collapse during the Reconstruction era, then lionises the Ku Klux Klan for saving the region from their inbred and lustful desires for Lillian Gish? Still, the auditorium was packed with college students and young intellectuals, many of whom had never heard of *Birth Of A Nation* or its controversial place in US film history, but were Spooky fans eager to see one of his typically eccentric performances.

Thankfully we did not have to sit through the full three hour version of the film. Instead, Spooky proffered a truncated, hour-long compilation of scenes, then used *May/MSP* software to rearrange them into a blurry atmosphere meditation on *Birth Of A Nation's* key issues: the archetypal plantation as utopian society, the Civil War and the destruction of Southern autonomy, the blacks' manipulation of Reconstruction-era reforms to corrupt sacred political institutions and rape white women, and the Ku Klux Klan's reaffirmation of white pride and law and order. Though certain scenes, one in particular depicting a fierce battle between the North and the South, were allowed to stand on their own, Spooky chose to repeat, cut short and overlap others with images of newspaper clippings trumpeting the film and his own logo (a branding device on every title card that replaced Griffith's "DWG"). Meanwhile, he looped a bongo loop lifted from an uncredited performance of the Dixie Soul group "Dixie" to create an eerily tenuous, yet ominous, musical atmosphere reminiscent of his own 1996 release *Songs Of A Dead Dreamer*.

The set effect ably deconstructed *Birth Of A Nation's* miscellaneous scenes while averting a head-on confrontation with one of the film's greatest strengths: its powerful narrative arc that, over its original three-hour length, lived up to President Woodrow Wilson's claim that it was like "writing history with lightning", with all the pace and charged emotions such a statement suggests.

In the panel discussion following the performance, Spooky immediately disarmed the audience by noting how *Birth Of A Nation* was filmed in the same location now used by the TV soap *Baywatch*. As *The World Turns*, consuming his disassembling of the film to playing with Logo toys, he said that he hoped to show how "repetition reinforces a sense of amnesia", reinforcing history as a "seamless media illusion" instead of the ever-evolving collective consciousness it truly is.

Other screenings under the Other Minds film festival umbrella included Terry Riley performing *Music With Balls*, the American premiere of a work-in-progress Frank Zappa documentary *Phase II - The Big Note*, as well as a showing of his 1979 concert film *Baby Snakes*; and feature films like Lars Von Trier's excellent musical *Dancer in the Dark* and Peter Dinklage's *Passion*, the latter a bio-pic of classical composer Percy Grainger, as well as a German documentary *Gene Ammons: Bad Day Of Music*, and the BBC film *West Coast Story: Producers Of Music*. The latter is best illustrated with the film's opening scene: John Cage, wearing a Marlon Brando and smiling mischievously, is filmed receiving an honorary doctorate from the California Institute of the Arts while hundreds of students dressed in the most garish 80s fashions imitatively cheer him on. Other segments focused on California composers like Harry Partch and Harry Cowell paying homage to Bartók's gamelan music with a piece titled *Duo/Duo*. It brought laughter and joy to a crowd that was decidedly older than the Spooky fans from the night before. The broad spectrum of screenings confirmed the Other Minds Film Festival to be an entertaining not to mention stimulating spectacle. □



## Cross Platform



Left: A scene from *Logic of The Birds*. Right: 242 Pilots Live in Bruxelles DVD

### SHIRIN NESHAT: LOGIC OF THE BIRDS LONDON UNION CHAPEL UK

BY PHIL ENGLAND

*Logic of The Birds* is a collaborative work between visual artist and film maker Shirin Neshat and a group of fellow Iranian artists now living in New York. Of these the most significant is vocalist and dancer Susan Deyhim, whose presence and performance is central to the work. Loosely based on the 12th century Persian epic *The Conference of The Birds* by Iranian poet and mystic Farid al-Din 'Attar, the piece opens with a sea of faces gently swaying on three screens, filmed in black and white and accompanied by Deyhim's voice sampled and layered into a building choral mass. The film fades to reveal shadows of the cast standing behind the three screens, illuminated by bright white lights from the rear. The interplay between action off- and onscreen as a theatrical device is employed throughout the piece. The cast dressed in black move towards the front of the stage. Deyhim appears from between the screens with an elaborately veiled headpiece and delivers a shamanically inspired improvisatory vocal incantation – her breathy, percussive sounds recalling at times Iranian vocalist Saeidh Koushi's guttural singing.

Deyhim, who left Iran aged 17, sits outside any Persian vocal tradition. Although she may relate to tradition at times, it is only as a part of her

stylish repertoire, which encompasses many global styles as well as the obsessions of Western improv. Her music partner, Richard Horowitz, contributes a few passages of arranged music. His writing is characterised by its astatic instrumentation and, while flawlessly executed, it conforms to the distance and remoteness that characterise the film soundtrack genre.

On film, Deyhim walks into a bright lake until she disappears underwater; as if immersed in a sea of solitary self-exploration. A crowd looks on, lost, without a compass and looking for a sign. The moral of the piece is that people need to look inside to find true enlightenment – rather than trying to evaluate others that have undertaken such a search. The rest of the show follows the stages of the journey towards self-knowledge, stopping it down exactly to its symbolic, elemental stages – air, water, fire and earth. Dreamers from a smaller island stage provide the set for Deyhim to spin dervish-style in a black rubber outfit, while in the penultimate sequence, in a long flaming red dress, she delivers her most powerful address.

While Deyhim's obscured performance is never less than captivating, *Logic's* downfall is the reduction of its narrative to a series of over-simplified images and symbolism so hackneyed it is rendered empty of any meaning or power. Metaphor has been an overriding feature of Neshat's work to date, although post-9/11 she has become frustrated with this approach and is

becoming increasingly outspoken. In a recent interview she regretted that the attacks on the US had not led to an increased understanding of Middle Eastern issues. She also said she was opposed to an attack on Iraq intended to secure US control of oil resources. Neshat's programme notes are nevertheless unhelpfully open to interpretation. Her elevation of the somewhat heretical tradition of Sufism in opposition to mainstream Islam could, perhaps unwittingly be read as an opposition to the emerging post-revolutionary Islamic democracy in Iran, thereby strengthening the hand of imperialism. Now that action against Iraq may follow another US-led military attack against Iraq, the time for such ambiguity is surely at an end.

### 242.PILOTS LIVE IN BRUXELLES CARPARK CRIPST DVD

BY KEN HOLLINGS

As if to emphasise the deconstructed and borderless flow of new audiovisual data streams, the 242 pilots are drawn from a wide geographical spread. New York's Kurt Ralke (formerly of post-structuralist rock outfit *Ultra Void Sound*), Polish cinematographer Lukasz Lisowski and Norwegian media artist HC Gile. The event documented here took place at Le Petit Théâtre Marquis in Brussels, with music by Justin Bennett, a British composer now based in Holland. With increasingly sophisticated software

permitting the live interplay of the abstract and the figurative, the representational and what Duchamp chose to call the 'non-represent', fully of location has become less important than the permanent shifting of relationships. The visuals are an undifferentiated mixture of geometric complexities, street scenes and landscapes, interspersed with fragments of found footage.

The perpetually unresolved relationship between these elements ultimately becomes more engaging than any intrinsic meaning or impact they might convey. The issues of focus, interpretation and attention thrown up during the live collaboration don't always appear to be fully confronted by the group themselves. In an accompanying interview feature for Belgian TV at the end of the DVD, they express a clear preference for presenting their work before a seated audience in a theatre rather than in the random swirl of a club environment. But new technologies and approaches belong in such old structures?

It's interesting that Bennett, in supplying a live soundtrack to the visuals, speaks of trying to determine a narrative development in the spontaneously generated imagery. Undoubtedly, he wouldn't be the only one attempting to do so within the confines of an auditorium. The members of 242 pilots have the technology and skills to cover all four walls of a space, not just the one their audience happens to be facing. It would be great to be there when they do it. □

## Go To:

**Aspen Magazine**

The multimedia magazine in a box

What is a new concept in art? A multimedia magazine of the top artists published from 1968 to 1971. Each issue of Aspen was designed to be a complete art experience. It was a multimedia magazine in a box. It was a multimedia magazine in a box. It was a multimedia magazine in a box.

**HP MUSIC GUIDE**

What is a new concept in art? A multimedia magazine of the top artists published from 1968 to 1971. Each issue of Aspen was designed to be a complete art experience. It was a multimedia magazine in a box. It was a multimedia magazine in a box. It was a multimedia magazine in a box.

Kenneth Goldsmith's great sound poetry vault, **UBU Web** ([www.ubu.com](http://www.ubu.com)), just got better. All issues of *Aspen*, a multimedia arts magazine originally published between 1965 to 1971, have been added to the already vast amount of rare and unkind content found on the site. Each issue of *Aspen* was delivered to subscribers in a box, along with a variety of media, printed matter in different formats, phonograph recordings and even reels of Super 8 film.

*Aspen* was named after the US ski resort and conceived by Phyllis Johnson, a former editor for *Women's Wear Daily* and *Advertising Age* who felt that the bound magazine format was too limiting. It appointed a new designer and editor for each issue. The magazine served function, in her own words, as "a time capsule of a certain period, point of view, or person".

The themed issues (Pop Art, psychedelia, conceptual art, minimalist art, postmodern critical theory, Fluxus and others) were worked on by a diverse selection of luminaries like Andy

Warhol, David Laizer, Quentin Fiore and George Maciunas. The site's dizzying array of MP3s includes impossible rare recordings by Marcel Duchamp, Richard Huelsenbeck, Wexler Cunningham, William S Burroughs, Edgar Wallace, Gordon Mumma, John Cage, La Monte Young, John Cage, Morton Feldman, John Tavener, Mike Ono and others, and the film section contains works by Robert Rauschenberg, Hans Richter, László Moholy-Nagy, Robert Morris and Stan VanDerBeek. Original issues of *Aspen* are now impossible to find, yet UBU Web has provided a neatly filed archive with all the content accessible for free. Freebies.

**Basic Hip Digital Doodle** ([www.basichip.com](http://www.basichip.com)) is an online magazine featuring all manner of exotic sounds. Read about and listen to Terry Schwartz's field recordings (he made 19 records for Folkways and Columbia) from 1940s New York. Download the entire recording of *A Dog's Life*, a story of Schwartz's adoption of a dog, a puppy, or Nueva York, a documentary on

the life of New Yorkers who have migrated from Puerto Rico. The site also contains a one stop shop accessing diatribes, record covers and MP3s of whirling dervishes, and a *Born The Clean* set on collecting the 40c 78 rpm albums containing sound effects and Bono talk. Go to Basic Hip for this and a whole raft of other audio oddities.

Besides being a medical procedure usually performed on the elderly, **Hip Surgery** ([www.hipsurgerymusic.com](http://www.hipsurgerymusic.com)) is "about storing the belly of popular music to avoid the overlooked and undigested artists of the past and the present who defy simple classification". Essentially a music guide containing a highly personal selection of artists from Brian Auger & The Trinity, Hip Surgery is frequently expanded and updated, and contains not only the biographies but also the cover art of a large number of artists billed here as "came by" or "craze" Mike O'Clock. □

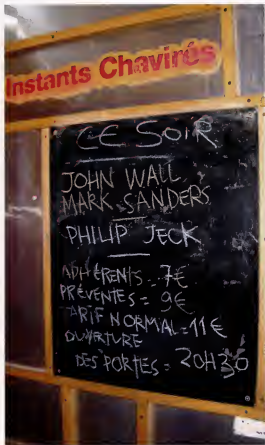
ANNE HALE NESBIT





# On Location

Live and kicking: festivals, concerts, events in the flesh



## THE WIRE 20 PARIS INSTANTS CHAVIRÈS

FRANCE

BY DAN WARBURTON & EDWIN POUNCEY

Free jazz legend Alan Silva celebrated his return to Paris after a decade in Germany by opening The Wire 20 festival at Les Instants Chavirès. Silva was appearing with his *In The Tradition* quartet, named after a 1993 release on Le Sile, which featured Silva on synthesizer, percussionist Roger Turner, trombonist Johannes Bauer and tenor saxophonist Abdelhamid Bernani, whose shapeless bellowings were fortuitously all but drowned out by Turner's ebullient drumming and Bauer's raucous trombone, not to mention Silva's dense synthesizer, a Kong programmed for Theonious Monk and Cecil Taylor, was backbeat driver par excellence. Both men maintained frequent eye contact, while Bauer whooped and howled on his own between sets, with Bernani remaining motionless and thankfully at a safe distance from the mic. The two predominantly energetic hour-long sets were well received by the capacity crowd.

Even more punts were crammed into the two instants versus the following night for a double bill featuring Leicester's Volcano The Bear and

Portland, Oregon's Jackie-O Motherfucker. Although similarities exist between both groups' iconic DIY approach to live performance — notably, the way in which songs appear as afterthoughts and don't end so much as unravel — their respective origins are two distinctly different rock traditions were apparent. VIB's ad-hoc multi-instrumentalism and studied amateurishness references a generation of British musicians — Steve Beresford, Alternative TV, This Heat — who were around when these jobs were in short pants, and the inspired lunacy of Syd Barrett. For their part, JOMF have that quintessentially American angst rock sound, a 'slow motion grunge plus John Fahey' cocktail laced with 90s Chicago. Singer Tom Greenwood spent much of the time crouched behind his turntable looking through his eclectic selection of vinyl while burning cigarettes from the first few rows of the audience, the only people who seemed to be listening.

Wednesday's concert presented a rare and fascinating opportunity to catch Keith Rowe, paired off with fellow guitarist Oren Ambarchi, and saxophonist Evan Parker with Lawrence Casserley on electronics. Paradoxically, in terms of architecture, Rowe and Ambarchi adhered more closely to the traditional rose and fall structure, while Parker and Casserley presented a more instrumental work in progress. In terms of material, however, their pitch and rhythm play wouldn't have sounded out of place in late 50s Darmstadt, a world the two guitarists have apparently left way behind. A few miles down

the road in the terminally hip Pompidou Centre, they would have loved Rowe's nervous scratches and sludges, and Ambarchi's thudding bass (the Australian was definitely calling the shots), whereas Casserley's intricate and reverberant transformations of several channels of Parker's soprano, fed through various delay lines to two Mac computers, and his elegant perceptive gestures of the MIDI keypad gave the second set a contemporary music feel more associated with IRCAM. At least it was until Rowe and Ambarchi crept back onstage to join in and promptly slowed the music down to their pace, with Parker remaining uncharacteristically reticent for much of the final quarter of an hour. (DW)

For the fourth and final evening of the festival, the excited audience were treated to a rare 'appearance' by post-electroacoustic composer John Wall in a duo with percussionist Mark Sanders. And indeed Wall is present somewhere in the room, but he's chosen to remain hidden at the side of the stage playing back his pre-recorded compositions of electronically treated source materials for Sanders to overlay with various percussion techniques and devices. The mood during their set is almost comical, with Sanders sitting alone behind his drum kit, head bowed in meditation. Listening intently to Wall's elaborate treatments, he allows their power to enter into his space before making his own, invaluable contributions. Compared to Wall's awesome, shilling electronic panoramas, Sanders' playing is thoughtful, minimalist and

purposefully restrained. Bowing and stroking a variety of cymbals, while occasionally lashing out at his snare, he skilfully regulates the abstraction of Wall's towering backing track.

Tantamount artist Philip Jeck's performance is another semi-staged event where he essentially leads a parade of the manipulated 'found' sounds spun from his two discarded record players, a tangled selection of outdated electronic games and a collection of scratched and warped vinyl records, whose dust-dusted voices he's bringing back to life in a new form. Jeck's art is the complete reverse of the slick DJ equipped with Technics decks, or the laptop electronic network. For one, he deliberately lo-fi approach is more tactile. Firmly pressing down the arm of his record player on a spoken word track to produce a guttural beat, he homes in on a twinkling children's lullaby and twists it into an aural Möbius strip of "Wo lay me down to sleep", which eventually unravels and drifts off into the ether, as an ectoplasmic echo comes into earshot. Jeck concludes his set with a looping rock 'n' roll flash-back of the opening guitar riff to "Shakin' All Over" by Johnny Kidd And The Pirates, it eventually flashes up a lightning bolt of recognition in one spectator, who screams out its title like he had just heard the voice of a long dead relative at a séance. Jeck eventually grounds his turntables and slowly meanders into the silence, even as they grow more difficult to excise from the memory. It was an astonishing performance. (EP) □

Left: Philip Jeck closes The Wire 20 festival at Paris's Instant Chavirès venue

## SUN CITY GIRLS NEW YORK KNITTING FACTORY

USA

BY CLARESSA HARLOWE

It has been almost ten years since the averaging guitars of Noli last terrorised America's East Coast — not that it showed in the faces of the three men wielding them. In the world of Sun City Girls, pop outfits gives up the secret names of its dark gods if you torture it right, crudity is the mark of the sublime, entertainment is no fun if you can predict what's about to happen, and time is beneath contempt. Without a hint of nostalgia, the trio casually batted out two hours' worth of incoherent improvisation, vicious stand-

up comedy, Indonesian pop, Satanic cocktail jazz, political rants ("Fuck the Zionsists!"), repatriated Chilean Peruvian folk, garbled deathbed show tunes, and a falsetto rendition of "The Look Of Love".

The multi-instrumentalist Bishop brothers and drummer Charlie Gocher work hard at confounding expectations — hence their fondness for both formal Improv and simple winging it. As usual, there was an overabundance of noise-roofing, intermittently seduced by Rick Bishop's delicate guitar filigees, but the Girls pulled off a couple of astonishing moments they wouldn't have arrived at otherwise. Halfway through the set, they were brandishing cymbals

like Uzis, as Alan Bishop rambled in the persona of a creepy Middle Eastern cab driver, and suddenly a couple of members of the audience went into trances: a man screamed out a nonsense word over and over, and a woman near the stage burst into a high, trembling ululation. The Girls glanced at each other and eased into a glorious call and response with the rogue vocalists. Not all their group-audience interactions went as smoothly. Alan asked the audience, "Any points out here?", then managed to completely scare off one woman who accepted his invitation to join the trio on stage by reading her updated lyrics to The Fugs' "CIA Man" to hand, which are even more satirical

than the original. I overheard the post in question explaining to her friend that "my dad's in the CIA".

SGG fans are pretty passionate about specific records in their anthologies' mammoth discography, and they enthusiastically called requests every time the noise subsided. Mostly with no luck, until the Girls belted the loudest guy in the room, who was following for "Cooking With Satori". For an encore, they pulled out a respectful score of Love's "Ain't No One In Or", of all things. The Girls use the Mean calendar, which runs out at the end of 2012; at their current rate, New Yorkers will get to see them again just in time for the end of the world. □

## On Location

### FRICTIES GHENT VOORUIT BELGIUM

BY PHIL ENGLAND

Voortuit is a beautiful building erected in 1913 by the socialist movement to provide affordable entertainment and education for the workers. Rescued from being turned into a car park or hotel in 1982, it continues to fulfill its original function as a bustling bar, cafe and venue for dance, music and multimedia events. The week-long Fricties ('Frictions' or 'Tensions') festival took full advantage of the building's various spaces in a series of concerts, installations and workshops that largely dealt with different ways of combining sound and vision.

The old argument among audio artists is that in our sight-oriented culture, the visual needs to be downplayed in order for sound to assert itself in all its subtlety. So have artists and event organizers finally capitulated to the idea that sound needs images to keep audiences interested? Or have artists found new ways of combining sound and vision more equitably?

Sampling and electronics artist Bob Ostertag and award-winning film maker Pierre Hibert opened the festival by popping open a can of cola. The sound, along with that of craps and roulette, becomes the source material for the music (in a parallel to Radiohead's *Pariahs* more beat-based work), while the discarded artifacts are incorporated into Hibert's visual presentation. Hibert has some neat software which remembers and replays the images he takes, allowing him to build animated sequences on the spot. To match him, Ostertag manipulates samples with a drawing tablet creating texturally detailed ambient sound one

minute and a laptop car from symphony the artist. Hibert's narrative takes us from the shopping trolley to the dustbin, as a solitary figure downs its waste.

The programme notes remark that the pair "are very aware that today's cutting edge technology is tomorrow's garbage" and in his talk the following day Ostertag—who has explored a variety of interfaces in order to escape the head dropped over a laptop scenario—reveals an increasingly tech-critical stance bemoaning the disappearance of craft and the pleasure of the task. One of the sharpest and most politically engaged thinkers in music, Ostertag has concluded that "this technology is destroying us". When someone from the floor asks why he doesn't abandon technology in response to its deleterious environmental impact, he responds that he considers it more constructive to continue to question the human-technology relationship through his art.

Phil Niblock shared the opening evening, filling the theatre with his layers of sustained tones and microtonal inflections. His music provides a space in which to consider the facts presented by his films of random workers carrying out traditional crafts and skills such as fishing, shoemaking, woodcutting, weaving, hand-weaving without either romanticising or dehumanising them. Their impact carries from the very fact that these activities are normally hidden from view for the 'consumer' interest. Despite Niblock's insistence that he introduced the footage as a solution to the problem of touring with dancers, these images are testimony of the enduring appropriateness and elegance of simpler technologies and work that's still imbued with the 'pleasure of the task'.

Down in the basement, Ger-Jan Pijns

presented a short car-cleaning solo set accompanied by a high-resolution TV monitor that was a little too sophisticated for his purposes—if the feedback input signal carried too much information the screen would block out. Yet it still provided pleasing streaks of coloured light as a fitting visual analogy to his radio feedback drip.

In situ were a number of installations: Touch label co-founder Mike Harding and Benny J. Nilsen (aka Hazard) had a desk and chair in a small room in the loft like an interrogation room and resonating with a 19 Hz frequency standing wave; on a stairwell landing Chris Watson set up an eight channel mix of animal communications recordings; and on a number of video monitors, Niblock's Experimental Informedia Foundation showed their collection of recently commissioned video shots.

Of the many artists encouraged to give masterclasses and talks, Hibert and Pijns both gave workshops, and Chris Watson—a leading sound recorder who has just completed work on David Attenborough's latest BBC documentary *The Life of Mammals*—was a two day hands-on class in the art of field recording.

Jon Watson's 'sound seminar' was a study in comparative music, ranging from the purging electronic violence of a forthcoming Mika Vaino release to the seductive neuroticism of Chopin's nocturnes. Let us up like a psychodelic light show by Victor Araya's dissolving films, Watson threw out ideas and contextualising information between tracks.

The climax of the week's activities was an evening devoted to 'Touch artists'. Label co-founder Watson's consideration of the question of party in combining the visual and

sound was reflected in his sensitive and inspired visual work throughout the evening. His solution was to limit the amount of visual information while celebrating the infinite beauty in nature and the everyday. Christian Fennema's chaotically structured, processed sound and glittering noise scores were matched with Watson's film of the hypnotic play of light on water, while Hazer's electroacoustically treated field recordings were accompanied by Watson's and Araya's superimposed side projections and playful dissolves. The first half of Rafael Toral's set showcased a new mix of bubbling analogue electronics and theremin before bleeding seamlessly into his sumptuous trademark multi-guitar drone which he rode, tweaked, permed and mixed.

Niblock rounded off the evening by playing back assorted compositions from his *Touch Works* release, accompanied by a sequence of slides programmed to dissolve at a fixed and fairly fast rate, but their impact was diminished by the dull, over-blue quality characteristic of digital cameras. Compared to the films, the slides were more object oriented—as if straight out of National Geographic magazine—but they still told a story about the complexity and richness of so-called 'underdeveloped' nonparty-world cultures that remain close to nature and are relatively sustainable. In an unplanned moment of 'blind listening', the images dropped out through a technical hitch and we were able to experience the full dynamic impact of the rich, sustained soundfield of his piece for hardy-gurdy. □

Top: Bob Ostertag at Fricties  
Bottom: Phil Niblock, left, and Carsten Nicolai at Instal

### INSTAL GLASGOW THE ARCHES UK

BY DAVID KEEDMAN

The live presentation of new electronic music is still an aesthetic minefield. Musicians the inherent performance aspect of musicians wrestling real time responses from physically demanding instruments, there's not much point in actually having the musicians on stage at all. With *Instal*, The Arches' annual new music blowout, curator Barry Eason has come up trumps by creating a genuinely interactive multimedia environment for the presentation of new music. *Instal* is spread over five rooms in the bowels of Glasgow's Central Station, and visitors are encouraged to wander from room to room, where genuine acoustic jazz performances give way to archways of amplified insect noises, and monolithic film screens, flanked by speaker towers, relay epileptic shots of obscuring white light.

Although many of the performers succeeded through the sheer physical fact of volume, there was a few brave musicians prepared to throw a spanner in the works. Premier among these was the Japanese composer Ryoji Ikeda. Asanaka's CV is all over the map and his huge back catalogue documents a staggering variety of working strategies, from minimal electronics and subtly doctored field recordings to blunt piano works and vegetative dristles. Tonight's piece was

specifically commissioned by *Instal* and performed by The Paragon Ensemble, an orchestra that are doing more than anyone in Scotland to take new music out of the airless halls they're so often associated with. Asanaka's piece is scored for cello, percussion, contrabassoon and chibukin. The performance had the same kind of rollicking off-kilter energy as one of Harry Patch's home odysseys. Ironically, it was unlike anything Asanaka has done before, yet his thumbprint, a vague melancholy combined with constantly shifting textures and a real sense of place, remained identifiable. It was a blast to see legions of crew cuts and bubble jocks with their jaws to the floor over a small acoustic ensemble wrestling such a beautifully complex idea from their hands and throats.

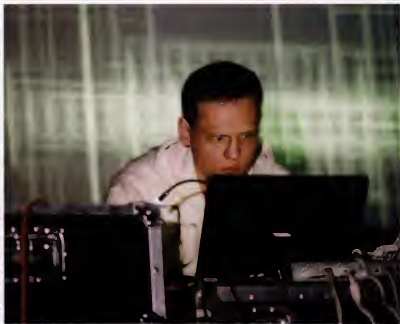
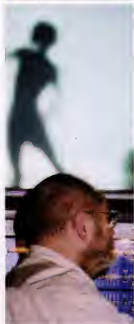
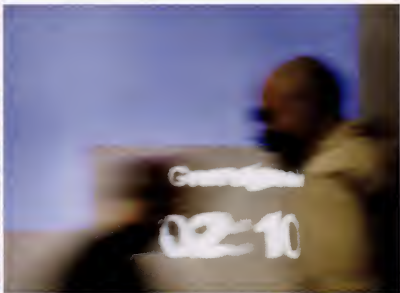
Stephen Mathew was nowhere to be seen for his piece, leaving the audience sprawled in front of a huge screen that slowly bled from grey to blue while the music, auto-tuned clusters of spooling digital sound, mimicked its subtle gradients. For Aki Nino's performance, Carsten Nicolai took centre stage. His set was the closest that anyone got to being danceable, with its fluctuating pops and twists plotted by a back projection of red drawings and cubes that ceased and floxed in time. But the level of care effectively militated against anyone actually dancing, with the weight of the bass enough to pin the audience to the spot.

Japanese total minimalist Ryoji Ikeda, again working from somewhere off stage, also used bursts of rhythm, along with a projection that alternated blizzards of machine code with sudden explosions of binding light. Although he wasn't as loud as everyone had been hoping, his use of tactile percussive blips was trouser flapping.

With the cancellation of the UK-dance group Mirror through illness, minimalist composer Phil Niblock performed two separate sets, as well as programming a series of films between performances. Commandeering the 'cathex' room at the back of the Arches, he worked from a desk in the corner, triggering slow blooming coils of electronics from four speakers situated in the corners of the room. It was best experienced on your feet, enabling you to wade through news after news of dancing notes. Niblock's use of films of labourers taking over repetitive tasks was just as complex. They worked on several simultaneous levels, lending profound meaning to the universal patterns and systems of organisation that exist in folk and industrial cultures while at the same time highlighting the often mind-numbing and dehumanising aspect of repetitive work. There were undoubtedly some fabulous moments, when the visuals and sounds seemed perfectly in tune, like when a particularly vicious total coil seemed to blow apart just as spider-like threads of blue silk shot through an

image of an old wooden loom.

Electroacoustic sound artist Francesco Leptori rounded off the night. On disc Leptori's conceptual silences might have extremely limited appeal, but tonight's show was unforgettable. Once more hailed in the 'cathex', everyone who entered was given a blindfold before positioning themselves on the floor. Curator Barry Eason did nothing to reassure the faint-hearted when he warned that Leptori's performance would get 'pretty intense'. López himself was seated inside a tent in the middle of the room. As you lay on the floor the rumble of the trains passing above rattled the walls while López sunnied distant interludes and ambient washes of processed environmental sound, which in themselves were slightly predictable. But at a certain point you suddenly felt yourself hallucinating, like you'd been woken and had no idea of how long you'd been asleep, and the floor itself felt like it was moving. Then you started hearing what sounded like gas being pumped into the room. I later heard that these sounds prompted many audience members to whip their blindfolds off in panic. But those who opted to stay in the dark were sucked even further down, with volume levels that were truly invasive, infusing your body and vibrating your bones. By the end of the performance everyone looked shellshocked. In this instance, experimental music involved being experimented on. □





Horn of plenty: Ornette Coleman in San Francisco

## SF JAZZ FESTIVAL SAN FRANCISCO VARIOUS VENUES USA

BY AMY WESTERVELT

The San Francisco Jazz Festival can make you nostalgic for a time when both San Francisco and jazz were a little grungy, a little more drugged out. We all know that times have changed, but the festival programmers did their best to bring us the remnants of the legendary days of the late 60s. At its best, despite sitting in a chancel-filled symphony hall, the festival made you feel as if you were hanging out in a smoky lounge with a bunch of bedkins.

In an effort to introduce a new generation to new jazz, this year's festival included not only some of jazz's more established names—Ornette Coleman, Yusuf Lateef, Evan Jones, John Surman and Jack DeJohnette—but also less traditional, jazz-influenced artists like Brazil's Caetano Veloso and The Yellowjackets. In fact, the only sold-out concert of the entire festival belonged to Veloso, who superbly combined his revolutionary 60s Brazilian Tropicalia songs with traditional samba beats and new combinations of electronic music, Afro-

Brazilian rhythms and even the occasional rap. In the process he proved to hundreds of adoring fans that he's still the great innovator of Brazilian music. He's also incredibly entertaining to watch: executing a bizarre chicken dance, grabbing his crotch constantly, plus, he's tooting with a group of Afro-Brazilian percussionists who provide whirling drumbeats and can samba with the best of them.

In a refreshingly casual break from the formal setting of the rest of the festival, The Yellowjackets, joined by guitarist Vernon Reid and DJ Logic, played a late night party in the Regency Center's Grand Ballroom, providing festival goers with a chance to get out of the velvet seats and shake their butts to a fusion of jazz, hip-hop, electronics and drum 'n' bass.

Just before that party, Evan Jones celebrated his 70th birthday by mounting with his former John Coltrane quartet colleague, pianist McCoy Tyner. Tyner brought his big band with him to open for Jones's group Jazz Machine. Though the big band style felt stale after the first song, nothing beats seeing Tyner and Jones play Coltrane's "Forever Blue". Aside from this collaboration, the two didn't share much stage time, but Jones's group was amazing. With Delfino Marsalis on trombone,

Pat La Barbera on sax and Carlos McNally on piano, they tackled everything from "What A Wonderful World!" to traditional Japanese folk songs. Clothed in a stark white Japanese kimono, Jones tore into his drums, bearing all the while, and returned for three encores.

The duo of Paul Pianky and Lisle Ellis gave a less than stellar performance—repetitive and too safe in too many places—opening for Jack DeJohnette and John Surman. However, the latter duo provided a stark contrast, each playing up to three different instruments, and incorporating Indian, Arabic and Latin influences with a solid jazz background. An added bonus: Surman has a charming habit of ducking with delight every time he tries something new and it works out.

At 82 years old, Yusuf Lateef is one of the elders of the jazz community and also one of the most adventurous. Held in a packed theatre at Yerba Buena Gardens, his concert felt like more of a piece of music theatre, and included several impromptu poetry readings from Lateef, standing next to his flutes or beside his piano bench. Percussionist Adam Rudolph played a dozen different instruments, including congas, djembe, tablas and durbek, several of which were hanging from the theatre's ceiling or

tacked to the wall.

Finally, on the fifteenth night of the festival, Ornette Coleman shuffled onstage in white spats and a harpouse suit, mumbled something inaudible into the microphone and proceeded to blow the parts off any saxophonist, living or dead. With his son Denardo on drums and the incredible Chermet Morlett on bass, who often made his instrument hum like an electric guitar, Coleman manoeuvred through more than two hours of the new material he had composed solely for this performance. He is still very much a practitioner of harmalodics: not only did he manage to modulate chords and manipulate timing without missing a beat, he did so while switching instruments at least twice per piece (usually starting with alto sax, and incorporating tenor sax, flute and violin along the way). The two's set ranged from uptempo swing-bop numbers to less structured, dark, meandering compositions that made the hairs on my arm stand on attention. It was the highlight of the festival, and I was disappointed not to see a sold-out house. Ever the professional, in response to a ten minute standing ovation, Coleman returned to the stage, not to play, but to take a few elegant bows. □

## ADVENTURES IN SOUND LONDON QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL UK

BY TOM PERCHARD

With six acts playing over six hours, this afternoon was essentially a festival within the London Jazz Festival, replete with light show, dry ice and projected film. First up was the young English keyboardist Manuel Bourne. Although he boasts prizes from both the Premier and BBC Jazz Awards, he has realised that no one in their mid-twenties should let themselves be entered in the category of Brit jazz without a fight. Accordingly, he opened with a solo set that combined performance art with brutal piano violence. Banging on a spelt typewriter, Bourne parodied the image of the tortured Romantic artist before launching into his own, politically committed alternative; now the piano was accompanied by swaying and a Chris Morris cut-up by George W Bush. On this showing, Bourne is desperate to be dangerous, but his acting sucked and the music was just a routine, a string of carefully planned effects that made him look less like the new Cornelius Cardew than a malcontent Victor Song. He was no more threatening when his group joined him in some

tedious electric jazz à la Live-Evil.

Things got a lot more interesting with the arrival of DJ Spooky. Replacing the big screen's film with a blow-up of his Mac desktop, Spooky showed three videos of "visual jazz" that he'd constructed from archive performance footage. The old film was cut up in the same way Spooky accompanied the video, along his own Optometry album into Max Roach's drums and Miles's trumpet. Coltrane, Bud Powell, Monk, Lester Young et al. leapt in and out, jazz genres appeared in sight and sound. Despite the pace and dynamism of the music and film, Spooky's stage manner was akin to a boardroom executive giving a PowerPoint presentation, relating in too much detail how the thing was put together and almost spoiling for the (superb) results. Like Billie Holiday says, "Don't explain".

Before his own solo set, Evan Parker joined Spooky for a duet, creating a certain collective apprehension as the crowd wondered what Parker would do with a breakbeat. What he did was "Evan Parker, maybe more melodic and vocal than usual, but just as tricky."

Matthew Shipp's trio, with William Parker on bass and Gerald Cleaver on drums, was the first music to expose the poverty of the sound

system. Shipp's slinky lines and Parker's big boom were both lost in an acoustic bubble, but the set was no wet-ink. Quietening down in anticipation of a Parker solo, for several minutes the group operated at minimum volume without sacrificing any of the activity and contrast of their most head-bowed playing. The programme of Shipp originals was interrupted by a dislocated "On Green Dolphin Street", people talk about Shipp's lack of swing, but this standard highlighted exactly what it is that gives the pianist's playing its uncut rhythmic feel. Over lush and well-lined left hand chords, Shipp clunked out lines in his characteristically clipped way, rarely articulating notes in jazz's long-short style but instead giving each equal weight. His playing doesn't work with hierarchies of accent and dynamism, but Gerald Cleaver's drumming certainly does. It's impossible to guess where the shocks will come from any one of the lot, any point of the pulse. But Cleaver's sound is characterised by his feebly harsh, spring cymbals, created from some of the least sophisticated elements known to metallurgy.

The concert's second half assembled ad-hoc groups from the pooled musicians, beginning with Mark Sanders and the Parkers. In another

two, Shipp and Cleaver thought they had begun some quiet Euro Impro, until DJ Spooky finished booting up and took the mic to explain what programs help be using. The result of his impromptu intrusion was delicate flying out of the window. Good: as a result we heard Cleaver going head to head with a UFO-style OM Snot test, and Shipp swagging "Elophropy" under Spooky's dense web of scratched drums solos, synth manipulations and beats.

Ending the event was The Soarch Trio, with Sanders subbing for drummer Paul Nissen-Lane, who had to stay behind in Oslo after injuring his back, while guitarist Rosal Björkenheim and bassist legbatist Håker Flaten looked in with the obscene thrusts of cock-rock tradition. For all his best lines, pouting and sudden crotch thrusts, Björkenheim is a very good improviser, rhythmically spiky and sonically extreme. But it was difficult to hear the music above the noise of the sea; it may have been fun for about ten minutes, but Björkenheim kept it up for an hour. I wanted to go home, and as the inevitable climax approached I hoped that I wasn't going to have to wait for the guitarist to take us in his arms and tell us we're beautiful. But this was unconstrained music. He didn't even promise to call. □

## EVAN PARKER AND THE ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC ENSEMBLE HUDDERSFIELD LAWRENCE THEATRE UK

BY JOHN CRATCHLEY

Evan Parker doesn't convert The Electro-Acoustic Ensemble that often, and when he does it's always with obvious delight at being able to give this collective a meaningful forum in which to perform. An augmented ensemble was invited to give the UK premiere of *Memory – Vision* (Storing Into The Time Cone Of The Future), Parker's new work for musicians and interactive video, at this year's Huddersfield Festival (see below).

The ensemble operates as four distinct yet interconnected units. The core of the group consists of Evan Parker on soprano saxophone and samples, Barry Guy on bass, Paul Lytton on percussion and samples, Phil Wootman on violin and samples, and Agustí Fernández on piano. The collective and individual output of the group is subject to sound manipulation by Joel Ryan, Walter Trap and Lawrence Casselle. This can take the form of manipulation of the core group's instrumentation in real time, subjecting it to an almost limitless transformation of sound identity, or as sampled

instantaneous playback, again transmuted and redistributed. The summation of this musical activity is then subjected to overall aural scrutiny by Marco Vochts, who takes the final decision over the collective sound mix to be delivered to the listener. The fourth element is the integration of Kjell Borgeggen's video images, either produced in real time or through reference to an already completed library, that are projected onto two huge screens behind the ensemble.

In his only allusion to jazz, Parker has provided room for all within the core group to improvise at will. The structure and positioning of these improvisations within the overall context of the piece is controlled by Parker, who directs matters from the front of the stage with perhaps a glance or nod to the respective soloist. The energy level is obvious from the outset, with Parker unleashing one of his characteristic cyclical breathing soprano solos. This is instantly punctured upon and transformed in tone into something ethereal yet still recognisably Parker in context. This will be a concert listened throughout the piece, as each core musician contributes to the collective with a display of extraordinary virtuosity. Barry Guy and Agustí Fernández should be given special mention here. Guy has such a prodigious technique that

the method of delivery looks impossible to sustain, yet his results are incredible. Using an array of bows small and large, rods to insert between the strings and other assorted percussive implements with which to coax an unbelievable array of tones from his double bass, he creates a soundscape of limitless potential. Similarly, Fernández plays both the outside and inside of the piano with equal slacity, hitting and plucking the strings, both prepared and open, with a delicacy or equal and opposite vehemence. It is quite impossible to tell who is manipulating what sound or how an individual musician is influencing the overall effect of the piece, which is a fabulous exercise anyway, frankly. Indeed, Parker's programme statement that the composition's central issue is "the relationship between composition is the sense that it is the product of a single mind, and the procedures and methods of collective improvisation which are central to almost all my group work" legitimate against the listener going down this blind alley.

The work concerns the role of collective ambiguity and the part that both short-term and long-term memory plays in composition. The necessary state of confusion that results from the natural desire to assign certain sounds to certain instruments and connect them to

recognisable psychomotor activities is totally confounded here. The almost inert manipulation of a laptop can produce music of unimaginable intensity and aggression, with a physical component entirely at odds with the device that produced it. This materialises itself into what Parker describes as the "subliminal halo" of the collective.

The visual element is perfectly co-ordinated with the music. Borgeggen's abstract images are highly textured, pulsing in empathy with the music. At times they are architectural and show a distant view, like a skyscraper skyline; at others they penetrate the distance with close-up images of structure and texture. Images flicker and refocus in monochrome shades, only to be replaced towards the end of the piece by vibrant colour interpretations. Shapes coalesce and then fracture, collide and then disintegrate. The 9/11 imagery is not overt but it subtly and totally pervades these abstractions.

*Memory – Vision* is not specifically about coming to terms with 9/11, although there are moments when music and image involve exactly that memory; but it is about dealing with the way we all interpret collective situations and the preconceptions, and link them to individual responses within a new musical agenda and its radical method of presentation. □

## HUDDERSFIELD CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVAL HUDDERSFIELD ST PAUL'S HALL/TOWN HALL UK

BY ANDY HAMILTON

On a rare visit to Britain, Christian Wolff assisted in the realisation of some of his too rarely heard compositions, programmed at Huddersfield alongside concerts of music by his New York School contemporary, Morton Feldman. Feldman releases might well be reaching saturation point, but the wonderful Freiburg-based Ensemble Recherche had researched some unknown Feldman for their Monday evening concert, which coincided with the release of their *Kalos* disc *Something Wild: Music For Film* (reviewed in this issue's Modern Composition column). Both disc and concert included the brief music from Hans Namuth's famous short film of Pollock at work, and his later film about William De Kooning. But amidst though these essays were, more essential was the quite magical instruments (all from 1977, done justice by the Ensemble's attention to detail) and the subtly resonant space of the converted church that is St Paul's Hall. The piece for three players on a variety of flutes, oboes and tremolos and percussive conveyed a rare intensity. The *Eight Pieces For Cello And Piano*, meanwhile, were more fragments than pieces – a moment's attention and they were gone.

The Ensemble reassimilated the following day for a mixed programme that included pieces by local talent. Bryn Harrison from Hobden Bridge, who incidentally could be described as going through a Feldman-style phase with his festival commission *Low Time Patterns*. The Ensemble

Recherche can make anything sound good; the young composer had commented modestly, but in this pulsing, softly breathing chamber piece featuring bass clarinet, bass flute, percussion and strings, they had plenty to work with. In Gérard Pousse's compelling *Mes Béatitudes* (1994-95), metronomic passages, extremes of register and toneless sounds were creatively integrated into the tonal structure, with the pianist gently tapping his feet or touching the keys without depressing them. On Bruce Fausst's beguiling *Hersperich Concerto*, the soloist had the advantage of the venue's new haphazard, prominently inscribed with the motto "Plus Fast Douceur Qu'Violence" ("Make Love Not War").

While the Ensemble Recherche are meticulous in preparation and performance, and not much given to improvisation, attention to the latter is a specialist of Anton Lukoszevski's Apartment House, who presented *A Portrait Of Christian Wolff* programme in St Paul's Hall. Certainly, it was a group after the composer's own heart, as he commented during the interval. *Brownian Music* from 1978 features variations on the song "The Peat-Bag Soldiers", sung by political prisoners in Nazi concentration camps in the 1930s, but the score of Wolff's music from that period, it came across as either monochromatic. His 1988 composition *Edges*, in contrast, reached a totally compelling realisation. Involving freshly improvised elements, the product of the composer's work with AMM was featured on Sonic Youth's groundbreaking *Geode* 20th Century. Throughout his career Wolff has engaged the performer in what he calls "working actively with contingency", treating the score as a kind of conversation; and since the performers listen to each other also, this is not strict chance music. The widely dispersed players on *Edges* –

strings, two pianists including Christian Wolff, trombone, electric guitar and two clarinets – delivered an entrancing intensity at a low dynamic level. Andrew Sparling playing his clarinet into a bucket of water produced a moment of hilarity. *Copies of Wolff's Core: Whings And Conversations* (Musicalities) were on sale at the concert. The book's embossed with John Cage's delightful quote about hearing Wolff's music: "All you can do is suddenly listen in the same way that, when you catch cold, all you can do is suddenly sneeze."

Earlier, the Bozzini Quartet had performed Wolff's *Exercises Out Of Songs* – it shows how infrequently his music is performed that this piece from nearly 30 years ago was getting its European premiere. They also performed Gerald Barry's *String Quartet No 2* 1998. Even the composer suggested that this was a problematic piece, though a possibly over-learned reading by the quartet made it less gripping than it could have been. Barry was evidently interested in an indeterminacy at the level of composition, as he commented in a later talk on the lack of sign posts for the listener. "That is, no doubt, a strange piece... I could never tell what's coming next..." What you get, essentially is a *je-fu-je* rhythm, a fragment of traditional virtuosity, a scrap of melody... none of it making much sense.

Barry's music got more extensive coverage in a concert in St Paul's Hall by The Ives Ensemble from the Netherlands. The Irish composer, born in 1952, was a student of both Stockhausen and Kagel, and maybe the latter's influence helped make him a classic postmodernist. Citing traditional forms but excavating them of meaning, his work is cerebral but curiously impressive. You might find it infuriating or fun but never dull. The affable, loquacious composer

explained in a pre-concert talk that he'd been inspired by a Rothko exhibition to write pieces that grab the listener by force – hence what he called "the straight-line piece", its title just a straight line, and the "o" with a line through it piece", which we heard from The Ives Ensemble. This 1979 composition succeeded in bending a traditional Irish melody out of all recognition; more Irishness was the Gunter (1994) – "I really feel sorry for the performers", Barry apologised – where The Ives Ensemble successfully negotiated fast canons only a fraction apart.

The Final Town Hall concert featured Barry's *The Bitter Lovers* Of Peter Van Kerk – second act only for some delightfully perverse reason. Based on the RW Fassbinder play and film about a fashion designer whose world gradually falls apart, this was an apt subject, given Barry's concern with artifice. Petra has fallen crazily in love with Karin, and at one point she puts on a Walker Brothers record and asks her, "Do you like this music?" "Yeah, sure," she replies, but the only music heard is Barry's. Like the composer said: "The perverse treatment of text is to me perfectly normal." The festival closed with Massimo Kagel's wonderful *Orchestra Strada* (1995-96), in which the Argentine composer imagines "merry-go-rounds and automatic organs as becoming serious vehicles for serious music in the open air". The ensemble from The Orchestra Of Opera Nova were meant to resemble a group of street musicians, but they looked more like they were riding a bus. The unlikely forces included two tubas with enormous mutes, accordion and tenor sax, in realising Kagel's entertaining pastiche, the players themselves take the steps on a giant street organ. I too have a dream, in which Mauricio Kagel himself produces serious music – only joking. □

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a festival for free improvised music!  
Oslo, January 15th - 19th, 2003

**Wed. Jan 15th, 18.00** The silent movie Hæxen, a musical Mini-datal  
John Barthling/Lene Gressager  
Sten Sandell/Raymond Strid (GUSSE)  
TRI-DIM  
Jorgen Traen (Sir Superman)

**Thurs. Jan 16th, 18.00**  
Frode Gjerstad/Lasse Marhaug  
Sten Sandell  
Tape

**Fri. Jan 17th, 18.00**  
Per Henrich Wallin Ysa  
Frode Gjerstad/Evan Parker  
Jazzhammer

**Sat. Jan 18th, through to Sun. Jan 19th**  
Sten Sandell, Evan Parker  
solo/duo/solo

**Sat. Jan 18th, 19.00**  
Buckefeller Music Hall 19.00

**Musicians:**  
Martin Hornborth (Jaga Jazzist)  
Ronni Le Taktro (TWT)  
Maja S.K. Røtjke & Lene Gressager (SPUNK)  
Martin Hornborth (Jaga Jazzist)  
Harpreet Bansal, Bjørn Solstad Skjelbred  
Lars Andreas Høeg (Trogve Selva Orchestra)  
Ulf Knudsen (Slater Rink)  
Kay Skogheim (BOY)

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Royal Festival Hall  
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ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL**

**RAY DAVIES**  
24 & 25 Jan RFH 8.00PM

**THE JON SPENCER  
BLUES EXPLOSION  
meets  
SOLOMON BURKE**  
31 January RFH 8.00PM

**CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN**  
2 February QEH 7.45PM

**ARTHUR LEE & LOVE**  
3 February RFH 7.30PM

**THE BEAT**  
7 February RFH 7.30PM

**+ MORE TO BE ANNOUNCED**

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**MOJO**

*The Music Magazine*

**Spring Heel Jack**  
Queen Elizabeth Hall

Thursday 23 January 2003

With Matthew Shipp,  
Evan Parker, J Spaceman,  
William Parker &  
Han Bennink



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**Saturday 8 March**  
**Cinematic Orchestra**  
Man with a  
Movie Camera

King's Lynn's Cinematic Orchestra team Queen  
Victoria's Cinematic Orchestra with a Movie Camera

**Sunday 11 March**  
**Tabla Beat Science**  
with Zakir Hussain, Bill Lauritt, Gop, Anir Kishor,  
Ustad Sahitya Khan & special guests

**Sunday 16 March**  
**Counter Phrases**  
UK premiere of new music by ten leading composers,  
with Film, featuring Brian Auger Company  
With live input from King's College

**Friday 21 March**  
**Kronos Quartet**  
Visual Music

Featuring the music of Steve Reich, John Zorn and  
Sergei Prokofiev, with graphic illustrations of music  
by Prokofiev and Zorn, and the visual  
realizations of Terry O'Reilly

**Saturday 22 March**  
**Kronos Quartet**  
Sun Rings

The NYSC Project. Commissioned by Terry Riley, designed  
by Walter D'Amico and featuring music and images  
from space gathered by the NASA Spacecraft



**Sunday 23 March**  
**Guy Barker**  
Sounds in  
Black & White

New compositions and music from the New York  
ensemble, featuring a new piece for just intonation  
and a new piece for just intonation

**Monday 24 & Tuesday 25 April**  
**The Film Music**  
of Spike Lee &  
Terence Blanchard

Music by Spike Lee, featuring Terence Blanchard  
and just intonation and performed with Queen  
Victoria's Cinematic Orchestra

**Friday 25 April**  
**Michael Clark**  
Would, Should,  
Can, Did.

Seven artists, seven movements, seven sets  
Clark's collaboration with the Queen  
Victoria's Cinematic Orchestra and the Queen  
Victoria's Cinematic Orchestra

**Saturday 26 April**  
**flag:burning**  
**WIRE + Jake & Dinco**  
**Chapman + Es Devlin**

WIRE perform a new piece, written by the first  
time with Es Devlin and designed by the  
Chapman Brothers. From their new work and  
single design by Es Devlin

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TATE & egg

**Tate Britain and Tate Modern**  
January – September 2003  
A new series of live events, created by Tate in partnership with Egg, which brings together the visual arts, music, theatre, film, and dance.

#### Cal Guo-Qiang

**Tate Modern, Millennium Bridge and the River Thames**  
Fri 31 January (time slot)

An extraordinary one-minute fireworks explosion project. Followed by a late opening of Tate Modern including a viewing of the **Cal Guo-Qiang** gunpowder drawing. Free – no ticket required

#### Anish Kapoor + Arvo Pärt + Peter Sellars

**Turbine Hall, Tate Modern**  
Fri 7 & Sat 8 February 20.30

A collaboration between **Anish Kapoor**, composer **Arvo Pärt** and theatre and opera director, **Peter Sellars**, in response to Kapoor's soaring sculptural installation, *Marsyas*, the third commission in The Unleashed Series. A new work by Arvo Pärt, 'Lament' later is preceded by Peter Sellars' theatrical setting of Antonin Artaud's

'For an End to the Judgment of God', staged as a Pentagon press conference on the current war. Tickets £27 IEIS concil

#### additional individual performances:

Fri 7 & Sat 8 Feb. 19.30  
**Arvo Pärt** Tickets £12, (conc. £9)  
Sun 9 & Tue 11 Feb 20.30  
**Peter Sellars** Tickets £12, (conc. £9)

#### Death & Resurrection

**St Paul's Cathedral + Tate Modern**  
Wed 16 April 19.30pm

**Sir John Eliot Gardiner**, the **Monteverdi Choir**, **English Baroque Soloists**, **Cadogan Hughes**, **Steve Marriott** and the **Brothers Quay**. Tickets £27 & £15

Plus world premiere live events at **Tate Britain** by **Nick Cave**, **Steve McQueen** and **Wolfgang Tillmans**, a **DVB** performance created by **Lloyd Newson** for **Tate Modern**, and more.

#### Tate & Egg Live: free

**Tate Britain and Tate Modern**  
February – September 2003

A series of monthly, cabaret-style events alternating between **Tate Britain** and **Tate Modern**. Includes a sound system installation created for **Tate Britain** by UK artist **Mark Leckey** (Sat 1 Feb), a Mexican wrestling performance by **Carlos Amorales**, plus events by **David Thorpe**, **Kyuri Kyuri**, **hobbybop** and **Gogol Bordello**

Tickets go on sale Monday 6 January 2003, from

**www.tateandegglive.com**

Ticketmaster 0870 060 2329 (24 hr)

Tate Ticketing 020 7587 8863 (Mon-Fri 10am-5.50pm)

Big fee applies to all tickets.

Concs - limited availability

More information **www.tateandegglive.com**

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THE WIRE

## Spring Heel Jack with Matthew Shipp Evan Parker J Spaceman William Parker Han Bennink

On 'Tues January 2003

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Michael Tippett Centre  
01225 463362

Thurs 23 London  
Queen Elizabeth Hall  
020 7960 4242

Fri 24 Exeter  
Phoenix  
01392 667080

Sat 25 Brighton  
(Dome) Corn Exchange  
01273 709709

Sun 26 Birmingham  
Medicine Bar  
0121 236 5622

Wed 29 Leeds  
The Windrobe  
0113 245 5570

Thurs 30 Gateshead  
Caedmon Hall  
0191 477 3478

Fri 31 Kendal  
Brewers Arts Centre  
01539 725133



Spring Heel Jack  
AMBIENT

CMN TOURS

If you would like to see CMN TOURS, please call 020 7587 8863, send us a mail to [cmn@tateandegglive.com](mailto:cmn@tateandegglive.com) or visit our CMN website [www.tateandegglive.com](http://www.tateandegglive.com)

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Tickets are £110 per person + £2 booking fee  
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Confirmed line up includes

A Guy Called Gerald  
Aphex Twin  
Cannibal Ox  
Carl Craig  
Coil  
Earth  
EL-P  
The Fall  
Russell Haswell  
Hecker  
Kool Keith  
& Kutmasta Kurt  
The Magic Band  
Mira Calix  
Jim O'Rourke  
Bernard Parmegiani  
Andrea Parker  
Pita  
Rhythm & Sound (DJ set)  
Skam records room  
Stasis  
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Thu 20	LONDON Queen Elizabeth Hall	020 7960 4242

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# Out There

This month's selected festivals, live events, clubs and broadcasts.

Send info to *The Wire*, 2nd Floor East, 88-94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA, UK

Fax +44 (0)20 7422 5011, listings@thewire.co.uk

Compiled by Phil England



Love's Arthur Lee gets his mojo working (left); People Like Us aka Vickie Bennett



## UK festivals

### THE RFH MOJO LONDON

The revivalist music monthly presents their second annual concert series at the South Bank. Arthur Lee & Love performs *Forever Changes* complete with horn and string arrangements (15 January). Ray Davies's new group make their debut with songs old and new, with Davies playing a solo acoustic set by way of support (25 & 26). Dischorded rockers Jon Spencer Blues Explosion team up with 1950s soul performer Solomon Burke (31), plus a reunion for Santa Cruz's alchemical rock combo Camper Van Beethoven (2 February), a second Arthur Lee & Love date but without the orchestra (3) and ska revivalists The Beat reunion to close the festival (7). London Royal Festival Hall & Queen Elizabeth Hall, 020 7960 4242, www.rfh.org.uk

### MOMENTUM: THE MUSIC OF MARK-ANTHONY TURNAGE LONDON

Season of work dedicated to the savvy orchestral composer. The programme features *Blood On The Floor*, which incorporates elements of jazz and depicts the life of heroin addicts (17 January), *Yours Rockaby* inspired by Samuel Beckett, *Momentary*, *Ends and Begins* (18, 19pm), Greek, adapted from Stephen Berkoff's retelling of the *Oedipus* myth (18), *Dark Crossing: The Iron Fields*, which sets poems

from WWI, *Bass Arctonion*, featuring double bass player Dave Holland (19), world premiere of *The Game & Deer*, based on the writings of Austrian poet Ingeborg Bachmann, plus the double percussion piece *Fractured Lines*, and *Three Screaming Popes*, inspired by the paintings of Francis Bacon (19). London Barbican, 17-19 January, 8-30pm, 020 7638 8891, www.barbican.org.uk

## International festivals

### ALL EARS

NORWAY  
New festival for improvised music inspired by drummer and percussionist Paul Milisen-Love. The line up features Evan Parker, plus local noisierks Jazkammer, Frode Gjerstad, Raymond Steig, Sir Duperman, Sten Sandell, Per Hesk Walin Trio, Tape featuring Andreas & Johan Berthling and Tones Høfforsten. The festival mixes with nine musicians improvising 'blind date' style to the cult film *Mulan* (*Witchcraft Through The Ages*). Oslo BiÅ, The Edward Munch Museum & Rockefeller, 15-19 January, 00 47 2220 9181, www.bi.no/english.htm

### CLUB TRANSMEDIALE

GERMANY  
Major electronic music and related visual art festival co-sponsored by The Wire. This year's

theme is "Play Global" and includes a focus on the emerging Eastern European electronic scene. Artists include John Oswald premiering his new "Sprinkler" project; a rare European appearance by Negerland's Mark Hovler, presenting "Negativland: Our Favourite Things", a series of video shorts followed by a Q&A session; a performance by San Francisco audio activists Ultra-Red followed by a discussion looking at strategies for musical-political action; an illustrated lecture by David Toop based on his *Exotica* book; KR Clayton & Sue Constable with an interactive video performance, an evening hosted by London club Sprawl with David Toop, Scanner, Tonne and si-outdo, moving image collectives from Switzerland; performances by People Like Us, Turkish artist Serhat Kozal aka 2/Red deconstructing 70s Turkish film, Radikal, Maptothron, the Thomas Mann Project (featuring Thomas Brinkmann, Focumen and Fehimann), Ken Babel, Pan Sonic and others. Each evening starts with a discussion, lecture or screening exploring themes relevant to the festival. Berlin, 31 January-8 February, 9pm onwards, 00 49 30 4404 1802, www.clubtransmediale.de

### SONS D'HYVER

#### FRANCE

12th edition of modern jazz and improvisation concert series. Concerts include *The Pyramet* too with Roy Campbell, William Parker and Hans Drake, Joe McPhee's Trio X, William Parker's

Raving On The Moon quartet (17 January), Ursus Minor (18), Jeff Beck, Ada Dyer and Boots Riley (19), Yves Robert Trio and Kohl El Zabar's Telfactor with Billy Bang and Harriet Blum (20), Arthur H/Merc Perrone duo and 4 Walls featuring Phil Minton, Luc Ex, Verjan Weston & Michael Yotcher (21), Red and Massore featuring Fred Feth, Bill Laswell & Charles Hayward (25), Moebius, Tony Hymas, Helene Labernere & Mark Sanders and Daunik Luzo, Paul Rogers & Paul Lovers (28), and the Kleimatics (30). Le val-de-Maine, 17 January-8 February, 00 33 1 4687 3131, www.sonsdhyver.org

### TRANSONIC 2003

#### GERMANY

Two-day event of a major new festival aiming to bring together the extremes of experimental and traditional music in non-western cultures. Alongside the seven concerts, there is a four hour anti-conference about "new music and globalization", with lectures, discussions and performances by Gerni Coleman, John Corbett, Otomo Yoshihide, Sachiko M, Carl Stone, Min Xiao Fen, Sandered Bagwathi, Henze Walker, Christian Utz and Yumiko Tanaka. The concert programme includes works by Liu Sola, Jo Kondo, John Cage, Isang Yun, Haj Takahashi, Gene Coleman, Filament, Carl Stone and Otomo Yoshihide, as well as a performance of traditional Gagaku music. Berlin Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt, 10-30 January, 0049 30 39 7870, www.hive.de



The Sea And Cake (left) at London Union Chapel; Spring Heel Jack on tour

## Special Events

### BOB COBBING TRIBUTE

UK  
A second tribute event for the recently departed concrete sound poet, this one organised by Lawrence Upton and featuring a host of associated performance poets. London Camden People's Theatre, 26 January, 3pm, 020 7916 5878

### RESONANCE 104.4 FM

UK > THE WORLD  
London Musicians' Collective's year-long radio project is now broadcasting an additional five hours a day starting from noon GMT. New shows recently added to the schedule include *Black Music* with Art Terry (Tuesday noon), *Mostly Blues* with Ed Sauter (Thursday 6pm), *Turntable Radio* with Mr Vix (Sunday 10pm), *Sound And Fury* (sic) with Dave Mandi (alternate Thursdays, 3:30pm), and the conceptual soap opera *Smecton* Kymes twice weekly (Monday and Friday 6:45pm).

This month The Clear Spot (weekdays at 7pm) will feature contributors by composers and performers Otero Yoshida, Katherine Norman, Erdem Helvacioğlu and AMM pianist John Tilbury; writer/performer Caroline Bengtson; and critic/provocateur/Intan Val Stevenson. Ongoing regular shows include *The Wire* writers Ben Watson (Wednesday 2pm), Edwin Pouncey's *Diggers* (Tuesday 5-6:45pm) and

Mike Barnes's *Scratching The Surface* (Tuesday 8:30-10pm); Peter Cusack on acoustic ecology (alternate Fridays 8:30pm), British folk music archivist Reg Hall and friends (Thursday 2pm), music critic David Quantick (Tuesday 3:30pm), alternative news from Indymedia (Wednesday 1pm), *One Way Single Parent Family Favourites* with Billy Jenkins (Sunday noon-2pm), field recordings from around the world on *Out Of The Blue* Radio with Chris Cutler (11:30-midnight nightly), *These Records*' Bermuda Triangle (Thursday midnight) and *Taking A Life For A Walk* with Caroline Kraeber (Saturday 1-1:30pm).

Check out daily listings for one-off specials. Broadcasts are across central London noon-3am, seven days a week. Watch out for repeated material broadcast outside these times. Web streaming and full listings at [www.resonancefm.com](http://www.resonancefm.com)

### TO HEAR YOURSELF AS OTHERS

#### HEAR YOU

#### LONDON

Richard Furlong, editor of the former cassette magazine *Audio Arts*, creates a sound installation comprising a "chorus of audible incidents, pauses, traces in choreographed sequences" which draws on the AA archives as well as sounds recorded in the locality. South London Gallery, until 19 January, 020 7703 6120, 020 7703 9799, [www.southlondongallery.org](http://www.southlondongallery.org)

## On stage

**GINA BIRCH + ANA DA SILVA + LINUS**  
Raincoats founders performing solo sets. London The Spitz, 15 January, 8pm, £6, 020 7392 9032, [www.spitz.co.uk](http://www.spitz.co.uk)

**TERRY CALLIER**  
A London residency for the soul/jazz troubadour. London Jazz Café, 6-8 January, £17.50, 020 7344 0044 tickets, 020 7916 6060 info, [www.jazzcafe.com](http://www.jazzcafe.com)

**JAY DEV VS BOOMDOCTOR MEETS THE GREWS**  
High energy keyboards and sampling quartet featuring Stephen and Nicholas Grew, Richard Scott and Jaydev Misty. Lancaster Farnies Arms (17 January), Newcastle The Cluny (18)

**FLAMING LIPS**  
US rock surrealists take to the high road. Glasgow Bowlands (15 January), Manchester Academy (16), Birmingham Academy (17), Bristol Academy (18), Nottingham Rock City (20), London Fomo (21 & 22), [www.mearfiddler.com](http://www.mearfiddler.com)

**FROM NAZIM TO MAHZUNI**  
A double-headed tribute event dedicated to revolutionary Turkish poet and musician Nazim Hikmet and traditional folk singer Mahzuni Şerif who died last May. Mahzan's son Ali will be performing alongside protest singer and baglama player Ferhat Tunç; traditional folk music from Kevrek Ali & Arç, Serhat Arçan and

Tahmina Türkü. London Green, 12 January, 4-11pm, £10 adv, 020 8533 0111 info, 020 7314 2800 tickets, [www.ocean.org.uk](http://www.ocean.org.uk)

**MAGMA**  
Only UK show for Christian Vander's powerful mantic rock group. London Queen Elizabeth Hall, 30 January, 7:45pm, £17.50-£19.50, 020 7950 4242, [www.urh.org.uk](http://www.urh.org.uk)

**JOE MCPHÉE/PAUL HESSION**  
Saxophonist Joe McPhee makes his UK debut on tour with Leeds' improvising drummer Paul Hession. London Orgoju at 291 Gallery (19 January), Liverpool Bluecoat Arts Centre (20), Leeds Terence Club at the Adelphi (21), Newcastle Corner House (22), [www.expnews.com/artists/joemcphее.html](http://www.expnews.com/artists/joemcphее.html), [www.joemcphее.com](http://www.joemcphее.com)

**ONE AWARDS TOUR**  
The Oscuras, Polyphonic Spree and their white robed jambores, Interpol and The Thrills hit the road. Glasgow Bowlands (January 26), Newcastle Northumbria University (27), Birmingham Academy (28), Sheffield University Footy (30), Liverpool Meritford (31).

Manchester Academy (1 February), Leeds Met University (3), Nottingham Rock City (4), Norwich UEA (5), Portsmouth Pyramid (7), Cardiff University (8), London Astoria (9)

**PHILIP ON FILM LIVE**  
UK  
Philip Glass and his Ensemble perform the

## Out There

composer's soundtracks for *Koyaanisqatsi*, *Powegatit* and more; plus newly commissioned collaborations with film directors: London *Babylon*, 7-11 January, tickets & info 020 7638 8891, [www.bbcfilm.co.uk](http://www.bbcfilm.co.uk)

### THE SEA AND CAKE

Chicago post-pop outfit promote their new third *Jockey* release, *One Bedroom*. London Union Chapel, 27 January, £12, 0207 734 8932, [www.wayshad.com](http://www.wayshad.com)

### SPRING HEEL JACK & FRIENDS

Springing out from their acclaimed *Thrasy Ear* releases *Messes* and *Amassed*, the UK experimental freeform duo assemble a formidable group of live improvisers including Matthew Shipp, Evan Parker, J. Spaceman, William Parker and Han Bennink, for a CMJ tour co-sponsored by *The Wire*. SHA's John Dixon and Ashley Wales enhance and complicate the group innovation with live sampling. 8th March, Michael Tippett Centre (22 January), London Queen Elizabeth Hall (23), Exeter Phoenix (24), Brighton Dome/Con Exchange (25), Birmingham Medinacore Bar (26), Leeds The Warehouse (29), Gateshead Cheadron Hall (30), Kendal Brewery Arts Centre (31). [www.cmtours.co.uk](http://www.cmtours.co.uk)

### TWO PIANOS

High energy electronic and acoustic piano improvisations from Pat Thomas and self-taught musician Stephen Greg. Exeter Phoenix Arts Centre (26 January), Sheffield Old Town (30), Liverpool Bluecoat Arts Centre (31), Lancaster Giggles Centre with Living Room, Steve Lewis, James Woods & Sylvia Market (1 February). 01524 368 109

### JAH WOBBLE'S DEEP SPACE +

#### MOLAN LAO + PHILIP JECK

Packaged for featuring the dub bassist working "On De Jay" in a collaboration with Philip Jeck, a special appearance by a group of London musicians performing the century-old Molan music – described as South East Asia's answer to reggae – and Jah Wobble's groove-based

improvising group Deep Space. London Cargo (24 January), Harlepool The Studio (25), Aberdeen Lemon Tree (26), Northampton Roadmender (27), Sheffield The Roadwax (28), Manchester Band on the Wall (29), Kendal The Brewery Arts Centre (30), Preston Marquee (31).

## Club spaces

### ANNEX NYE

UK Huston Pimps present a 12 hour now year's party in five different venues. The event warms up with DJs in four Shoreditch bars before moving on to the Annex from 10pm to 10am. Fit Trackers, Abso Blues, Los Chicharrones and Jeremy Newell are among the 30 DJs running the gamut from broken beats to classic disco, while the live acts include Sonar Fiy, Klang and Ok Dog. Plus visual art, short films and a showing of Matthew Barney's *Cremaster Cycle*. London various Huston venues, 31 December, 10pm-10am, £18 advance only, 020 7336 7171 info, 08700 600 100 tickets, [www.kickitweb.co.uk](http://www.kickitweb.co.uk)

### BAGGAGE RECLAIM

Packed and diverse leftfield live music night. John Basset's Project serve up their instrumental guitar pop; soundtrack composer Simon Fisher Turner's new solo project; vocals, toys and stories from LA's Anna Hammer, a guitar and electronics performer from French improviser Alexandre Bellenger; and an unusual improvising quartet comprising Tim Chert, Ben Dink, Paul May and Bag Rex MC Richard Sanderson. London 12 Bar Club, 26 January, 8pm, 55, 020 7916 6869, [www.bagrex.com](http://www.bagrex.com)

### BOAT TING

Free-spirited music and poetry night on a boat on the Thames. Headlines are the all-star improvising combo Noise Eating Monsters featuring Tim Hill, Pat Thomas, Steve Koehn, John Edwards and Alex Ward on guitar; plus poet Sibil Madigan in a dust with singer Maggie Nicolis; Lol

Coxhill's solo soprano sax; plus poetry from Paul Layalls and Sue Johns. London The Night Club (opposite Temple tube), 27 January, 8pm, 54/£2, 020 8670 5094

### BREAKIN' NIGHT

UK underground HipHop, funk and turntable night. Guest DJs Mr Thing from Scratch Pervers, Sura Delight (Dr Yex), plus guest breakdancers crews Children Of The Monkey Basket, Sisters and resident DJs. London Jax, 25 January, 8pm-4am, £3-£8, 07867 547 008, [www.breakinread.org](http://www.breakinread.org)

### BUGGED OUT MEETS

#### THE BOUTIQUE NYE

Dance your way into the New Year at this three room event in Hackney. Three hour DJ set from Andrew Wainwright, the 'king of punkster rap' Gonzales and Radioactive MC live. Bolans beats from Jon Middleton, DJs RC Kahuna, Jacques Lu Cont, Bass Juniors and Andrew Carter. London Ocean, 31 December, until 7am, £28 advance, 020 8533 0111 info, 020 7314 2900 tickets, [www.ocean.org.uk](http://www.ocean.org.uk)

### CUBIC CINEMA MICROPLEX

New Year extravaganza at this repertory cinema with the Zappa-esque Elkus Spectra and others live, films and DJ Motorboy, Pietermar and VJ Roddel. Bristol Cube Cinema, 0117 907 4190/1, 31 December, 8pm-2am, 55 in advance/55 on the door, [www.cubiccinema.com](http://www.cubiccinema.com)

### FABRIC LIVE

Three themed action at this major London club. New Year's Eve party with Greg Richards, Terry Francis, UNKLE, Hybrid, Ali & Ben Beller (31 December), Jazazzola, James Livvie, Ali & Grooverider, P. Buzza, Rich Pitt, Matt Smooth and Rob Mack (10 January), Lo-Fidelity All Stars live plus UNKLE, Goldie, Ali & Ben Beller Company (17), Matt Royale live plus James Livvie and Grooverider (24), Scratch Pervers, DJ Hyde, Zinc, Pencil, Muskeeters and Joe Ransom (31). London Fabric, 9-30pm-5am, £12/£10, info 020 7736 8888, [www.fabriclondon.com](http://www.fabriclondon.com)

### FLY NYE SPECIAL

All night end of year Boon dance-a-thon. HighPop, Techno and broken, latin and Afro beats. London The White Horse, 31 December, 8pm-6am, £20 adv/£25 on the door/£10 after 3am, 020 8678 6866, [info@whitehorselondon.com](mailto:info@whitehorselondon.com)

### JOINTED & DISTRICT NYE

New Hackney club celebrates the end of the year with a House, beats and breaks all night. London District, 31 December, 8pm-6am, £15 adv/£20 door, 0208 985 8986, [info@district-hackney.com](mailto:info@district-hackney.com)

### KLINKER

The off wall improvised music and performance club now on Tuesdays as well as Thursdays. Each night in January premieres a new non-encore film. New Year's Eve special with the Eulphans and Vyrn Weston/Kerry Bird/Dave Fowler trio (31 December), open jam session with Brandon plus Hugh McCallie's Feet Film (2 January), Mario Mattos (7), Tom Scott, David Aylward & Adrian Northover (9), Phil Manton & Hugh McCallie (14), Splitter Trio guitarist Miles Stoyen visiting from San Francisco with Gail Beard & Mark Sanderson, plus, from Germany, Wollan Der Spitz & Adrian Pella perform Kick the Bucket (16), London Sussex, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8pm, £5/£2, 020 8806 8216, [www.theinklinker.freeseine.co.uk](http://www.theinklinker.freeseine.co.uk)

### LAPTOP JAM

Audio-visual dig-jam. Bring your laptop and/or video footage. Event also webcast at [www.havina.com](http://www.havina.com). Brighton Highbury Ballroom, 14 January, 8.30-12.30 605789, [www.laptopjams.com](http://www.laptopjams.com)

### ONGAKU: ENJOY SOUND

Early evening improvisation concert in a neo-gothic church. The touring duo Joe McFhee and drummer Paul Hesson, with double bassist John Edwards, plus guitar to Ross Lambert, Anthony Gurnea & Daniel Seban. London 291 Gallery, 19 January, 8pm, £7/£5, 020 7613 5676, [www.291gallery.com](http://www.291gallery.com)

# UK Radio

## National

BBC RADIO 1 97-99 FM

### JOHN PEEL

Tuesday-Thursday 10pm-midnight  
The indie nation's bible

### GILLIES PETERSON

Wednesday 10pm-12am  
Post-Acid jazz

### FABIO & GROOVERIDER

Friday 2-4am. Newground d'n'b bass

### WESTWOOD RAP SHOW

Friday 11pm-2am/Saturday 5pm-midnight  
HipHop flows

### REGGAE DANCEHALL NITE

Saturday 10pm-12am. Bass culture

BBC RADIO 3 90-93 FM

### LATE JUNCTION

Monday-Thursday 10.15-midnight  
New Music compendium

### JAZZ LEGENDS

Friday 4-5pm. Archive recordings

### ANDY KERSHAW

Jazz 10.15-11.30pm. World Music

### JAZZ ON 3

Friday 11.30pm-1am  
Modern jazz in session and concert

### WORLD ROUTES

Sunday 1-2pm  
Friday 6-8pm presents a travelogue of global music

### JAZZ FILE

Sunday 6-8pm  
Documentary magazine

### HEAR AND NOW

Saturday 10.45pm-1am. New Music magazine

### MIXING IT

Sunday 11pm-midnight  
Hyper-electronic mix of avant sounds

Links to Net radio broadcasts can be found on  
The Wire Website [www.thewire.co.uk](http://www.thewire.co.uk)

## Regional

### BBC LANCASHIRE

95.5/103.9/104.5 FM, 855 MW

### ON THE WIRE

Saturday 10pm-midnight. The Wire's dub column  
Steve Barker mixes it up weekly

### BBC MERSEYSIDE

95.8 FM, 1485 MW

### PMS

Sunday 10pm-12am. Freewheeling mix of avant  
sounds

### BBC SCOTLAND 92.4-94.7 FM

### FROM BEBOP TO HIPHOP

Wednesday 7.05-9pm, Sunday 10.05pm-midnight  
Jazz and nu-jazz

### CABLE RADIO 89.8 FM

(MILTON KEYNES)

### THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

Friday 10pm-midnight. Eclectic avant mix

### JUICE 107.2 FM (LONDON)

### TOTALLY WIRED

Sunday 10pm-midnight. Leftfield new music

### KISS 100 FM (LONDON)

### PATRICK FORGE

Friday 10pm-midnight. Eclectic jazz-not-jazz mix

### FROST AND HYPE

Sunday 3-5am. Jungle

### 4 HERO

Monday 2-4am. Jazz, jungle, cyber-soul,  
breakbeats

### MATT JAM LAMONT

Wednesday 2-4am. More breakbeat science

### LONDON LIVE 94.9 FM

### SOLID STEEL

Monday 10pm-12am

Mind moving from the Ninja Tune mob

### CHARLIE GILLET

Saturday 8-10pm. World Music, roots and R&B

### RANKIN! MISS P: RIDDIMS & BLUES

Saturday 10pm-midnight. Steady roots

### RESONANCE 104.4 FM (LONDON)

Weekdays 10pm-11pm, weekends 10pm-11pm  
[www.resonancefm.com](http://www.resonancefm.com) (see Special Events)

### XF104.9 FM (LONDON)

### FLO-MOTION

Sunday 10pm-11pm. Leftfield electronic



Including: Cannibal Ox at All Tomorrow's Parties

### THE PLAYLIST

Radioheadman plays a decks and effects set supported by Dove Congee. London 93 Feet East, 16 January, £7, 020 7754 3297, [www.93feet.co.uk](http://www.93feet.co.uk)

### PLUG AND PLAY

Bring your laptop or any other audio-visual technology to this regular open house event. London Public Life, 19 January and every third Sunday of the month, 6pm-late, 07779 631008, [www.gpuba.net/plp](http://www.gpuba.net/plp)

### POETRY & MUSIC

Mike Parsons and Terry Coast tenor Francois Molin are joined by improvisers Paul Moss and Vladimir Miller from The Back Lane Film Ensemble. London White Bear Theatre Club, 28 December, 7:30pm, £5, 020 7793 9193

### QUIET CLUB

"The Only Club With A Strict No Beats Policy," boast the Brighton club. The Tacet Ensemble play John Cage's 4'33", Alvin Lucier's Silver Streetcar For The Orchestra and Steve Reich's New York Counterpoint at Brighton Little Marlborough Theatre (12 January); and Steve Beresford joins Brighton's electroacoustic improv quartet Urban Myth, supported by Pbhnt Quartet's acoustically inclined improvisations at Brighton Friends Meeting House (26). [www.clubquiet.co.uk](http://www.clubquiet.co.uk)

### SOUND 323

In-store afternoon concert at this north London record store featuring the improvising duo of violinist Anghad Davies and vocalist Viv Corringham. London Sound 323, 11 January, 3pm, £3, 020 8548 9595, [www.sound323.com](http://www.sound323.com)

### SPRAWL AT THE LIFTHOUSE

Seventh birthday celebration for the eclectic sound club. Live performances from Rap-Hip label's Wang Inc from Italy; sound collage V/D from Australia with guest collaborators David Top and Scarnet; minimal soundworks from Dorin Sadej, a vocals and electronics improvisation by Ito Garfield aka Bifbric and house DJ si-outs. London Lifthouse, 16 January, 7:30pm-midnight, £4/£3, 020 7251 8787, [www.dface.com/spswl](http://www.dface.com/spswl)

### TRILM SCHIN

This month's name for the Bohman brothers' improv and more weekly. TBA (6 January), TwelfthousandAnd label night (13), no concert (20) and an evening of slide shows with music (27). London The Bonington Centre, 8pm sharp, £4/£3, 01932 571323

### 333 NEW YEAR'S EVE

Ninja Tunes' video crew Hexstatic count down to the New Year on four large video screens, while Ois Sici & Rodney P Jools Butterfield, Ross Clarke, Shoreditch Twist, Renegade Pop Party and

Queens Of Noise men the decks with UK HipHop, merfly drum 'n' bass, party classics, off-centre House and noisy rock. London 333, Mother Backlayers Arms and Red Lion, 8pm-5am, £20 in advance only from 333 Old Street, The Backlayer's Arms and [www.333mether.com](http://www.333mether.com)

## Incoming

### ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES

UK IDM guru Autechre have put together an impressive line-up which includes themselves along with Aphex Twin, The Fall, Cannibal Ox, Carl Craig, UFO, The Magic Band, B-R, Jim O'Rourke, A Guy Called Gerald, Coil, Earth, Farmers Manual, Russell Haswell, Bernard Parmegiani performing. De Natura Sonorum, Pilsa, Req, Rhythm & Sound DJ set, Yasunao Tone, zowee\*france and a Skam Records room. Camber Sands Holiday Centre, £110, 0870 120 1149, [www.alltomorrowsparties.co.uk](http://www.alltomorrowsparties.co.uk)

### ONLY CONNECT

The Barbican's annual festival of new collaborations and cross-media projects returns with Cinematic Orchestra performing a soundtrack to Diego Verbo's 1928 silent classic *Man With A Movie Camera* (8 January), Tobie Bear Science with Zakir Hussain, Bill Laswell and

others (11), Lotus Ensemble performing new works by Jonathan Harvey, Steve Reich, Magnus Lindberg and more to the film of Thierry De Mey and the choreography of Anne Theresa Keensmaeker performed by Rosas Dance Company (18), Keenos Quartet perform a programme of 'visual music' by Steve Reich, John

Zorn, Penderecki, Conlon Nanorow, Harry Bertoia, Sigur Rós and Bernard Herrmann (21), Terry Riley's *Sun Rings*, performed by Keenos Quartet, with sounds from outer space commissioned by NASA (22), Guy Barker's *Sounds In Black & White* featuring music inspired by Rob Ryan's novel *Underdog*, plus arrangements of his work for The London Metropolitan Orchestra (23), the film music of Spike Lee and Tennessee Blanchard (21, 22), Choreographer and dancer Michael Clark in collaboration with Band Of Susans guitarist Susan Stenger and others (25 April) and Wire perform their 1977 album *Pink Flag* on a stage designed by YBA artists Juke & Onos Chapman, and their latest album *Send on a stage designed by Es Devlin* (26). London Barbican, various times and prices, 020 7838 8891, [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk)

Out There items for inclusion in the February 2003 issue should reach us by 6 January

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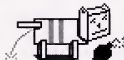
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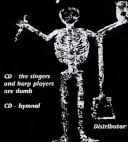
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# Epiphanies

KRS-One and rap's 'black CNN' were the key to Tom Perchard's understanding of musical modernism



Bronx cheer: KRS-One

Recently, flicking aimlessly through records in a secondhand shop, I came across a copy of *Electro 15*. This was the compilation that started it all for me, back in 1987. That year, my interest in music had been piqued by The Beastie Boys' tabloid-outraging UK tour, and I had started borrowing copies of the *Electro* series from my older friend across the road. All those mix records had their moments, but what I have always been able to remember is the way, on *Electro 15*, Kurtis Blow's "The Bronx" merged into Boogie Down Productions' "South Bronx". Blow's tune had the sort of cartoon shuffle feel and jive-talk, sing-song rap that was in and out of the charts at that time, so that didn't feel unfamiliar. But "South Bronx" wasn't like music at all: just a few clipped samples, with acres of blank silence between kick, snare and discordant horn blast. And, flowing like a river, in his own estimation and mine, BDP's KRS-One, who became my first hero.

Listening to the album now, I can see what it was about this music that excited me as an 11-year-old, and what it shares with the music I've got into since. I loved the way "South Bronx" sounded, its complex mix of sampled beats and simple rhymes, but there were other things too. The combined Bronx rappers represented a brilliant piece of traveltogue mixing, and while there was nothing wrong with my life of school and football, it was thrilling to step into KRS-One's world, one where MCs and DJs built up their skills in public rials in unimagined suburban Hertfordshire. There were jams at Mill Brook Projects and Cedar Park, B-boys powering sound systems by diverting electricity supplies, just like Ralph Ellison's invisible Man had. Remember, this was the era of Stock, Arken & Waterman, and chart pop was just awful; but KRS described music that was an activity, not a piece of plastic.

I understood Chuck D when he told Tim Westwood that rap was "the black CNN". These weren't self-contained little pop songs about puppy-love archetypes, but opened reports about the relationships between actual people. Of course, those relationships were pretty uncomplicated – be down with us, or else you're a part-time sucker – but they

stood for more than that when committed to vinyl. Because the "answer record" was rap's defining form, embodying the music's immediacy and antiphony. "South Bronx" was BDP's response to MC Shan's "The Bridge", a record in which Shan talked about HipHop's early days in his New York borough. KRS-One's response was unequivocal: "I didn't hear a peep from a place called Queens." It wasn't only the aggression and machismo of the battle that was foreign to the paper-light English pop of the time, but also the seriousness. With rappers competing to write the music's history, this seemed like an important thing that mattered, not ephemeral crap made to sell. And the way that this competition was conducted, through parody and signification, was as alien to pop as commercial concerns used to be to rap. When I realised that the phraseology of Scott La Rock's intro and KRS-One's verse on "South Bronx" sarcastically appropriated Shan's, I loved it. The music itself fascinated me for the same reason – the sampled drums, ripped in lo-fi from their original contexts, the bass drum coming from a different room to the snare; the horns and the James Brown interjections all coming from another decade. You have to be a certain type of person to say your first love was a set of recontextualisation practices, but there you go.

Later, I began wandering back into the musical history from which all those samples were drawn. European music history, too. My dad had been taking me to orchestral concerts since I was little, but now that I was becoming more inquisitive about music, dad's Romantics were getting sidelined. I had read about Bernd Alois Zimmermann's jazz-influenced trumpet concerto from 1954, *Nobody Knows De Trouble I See*, and went to hear it when it was programmed at the Proms. I could see that the title was dated, and maybe I'd heard any Third Stream music I would have thought that the idea was as well. God, it would have been abysmal in the hands of Gunther Schuller or Mark-Anthony Turnage: a serial piece with hints of the neo-classical, scored for a big band, sort of, that incorporated quotations from what Zimmermann would have called a negro spiritual. But it was just that confusion of styles and materials that

made the piece so powerful. I don't know if I realised that I was hearing the music with HipHop ears, but the way the composer pulled together sign-heavy musics from different times and places, making them work there and then, grabbed me that evening, and Zimmermann still holds my attention in a way that no other European musician can. I remember being dazzled by the pivotal scene from his nightmarish opera *Die Soldaten* the first time I heard it. The opera's characters exist in a soundworld that glitters like Wozzeck's knife, and their various deceptions and violence are sung in an incomprehensible and uncomprehending serialism. Like BDP's gathering of James Brown samples, Kool Herc references and Bronx River locations, these figures are tied up in music by a history of rituals and artefacts; when everyone's lives begin to unravel, found materials are used to provide a thread of commentary. Lines from an innocent folksong become warped with dramatic irony, and a chorale from Bach's *St Matthew Passion* depicting Christ's betrayal weaves in and out of a scene of domestic treachery.

Materials taken from the past to articulate what is absolutely present, things in the wrong place for the right reasons – Zimmermann's collage and BDP's rap are just representatives of two different surrealists traditions, an Ernst to a Basquiat. Maybe nowadays KRS-One occupies an ambiguous position in rap, too often taken for a self-aggrandising browbeater rather than the marvellous musician, word player, critic and commentator that he is. But he still does what he does with style and commitment, while Jay-Z and others do their thing with the calm swing that he pioneered. And it's true that the proud and honest "South Bronx" is now sampled and salvaged on the radio daily, an authenticity guarantor for J-Lo's homegirl bullshit. But that's the thing about found material: you can't keep weeping if the finders are losers. Losing his fight against depression, Zimmermann shot himself, while Scott La Rock lost a fight and got shot by someone else. But they had already found ways to locate their pasts in the present, and to map their cultural territories in sound. I stumbled in but didn't feel lost. □

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